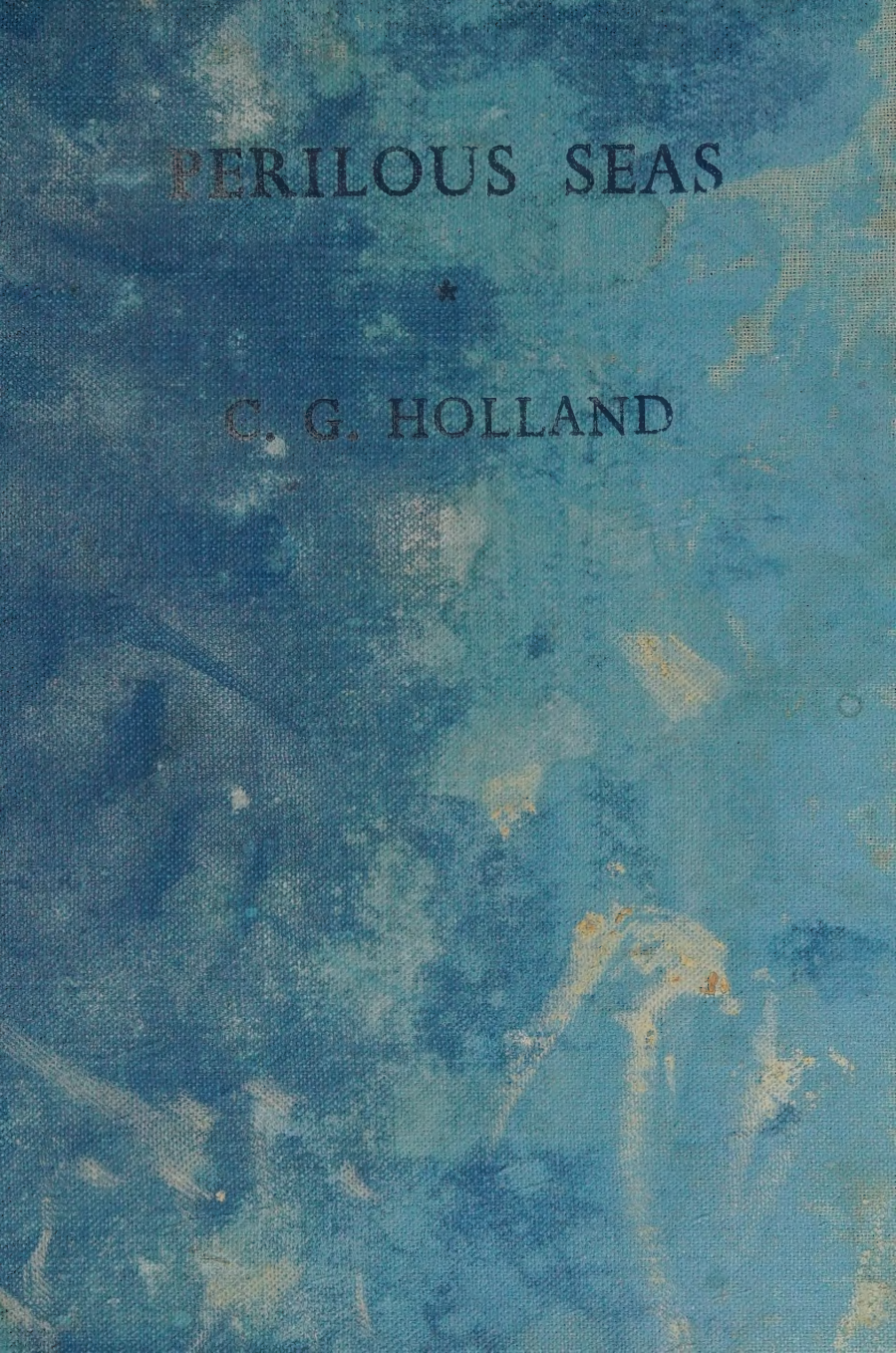
PERILOUS SEAS



C. G. HOLLAND

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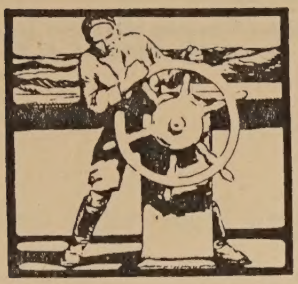
The boy caught a fleeting glance of suspicion (p. 121)

PERILOUS SEAS

by

C. G. Holland



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TO

THE BOYS PAST AND PRESENT

OF

SEVENOAKS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

1921–1928.

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FOREWORD

It is related, on somewhat dubious authority, that a citizen of a much maligned Scottish city of humour-loving and generous citizens having failed to solve a riddle propounded by a crafty Sassenach, retaliated by asking the following: "What is it that flies in the air, walks on the ground, lays eggs, has two wings and six legs?" The Englishman having admitted, not unnaturally, that he "gave it up," the Scot replied, "A stor-r-rk." "But," replied the other, "a stork has only *two* legs." "Oh aye, I ken fine he's only twa; I put in the other four to mak' it mair deeficult."

The story of the voyage of the *Jane* as it was told at the trial of the mutineers may be found in the Admiralty Court Records at Edinburgh. It has been most admirably summarized and retold by the late John N. Anderson, Esq., Ex-Provost of Stornoway, in a booklet entitled, *Spanish Silver at Stornoway*, published in 1911 for private circulation.

I have shamelessly made use of Mr. Anderson's engrossing little book in writing the story which follows, but I have altered the anatomy in several important particulars in order to "mak' it mair exciting."

C. G. H.

"Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

PART I

PERILOUS SEAS

CHAPTER I

THE ENGLISH CAPTAIN

SPRING had come at last, and the warm southern breeze, displacing the icy east wind, was chasing the white fleecy clouds which gambolled playfully over the blue sky like a flock of new-washed sheep on the slopes of the Pentland Hills.

Andrew Camelier had answered the call of the awakening world around him by playing truant. He grinned to himself a trifle grimly as he thought of his school-fellows repeating Latin declensions in the schoolhouse up yonder under the watchful eye and the ready tawse of old Dominie Ogilvie.

Down here by the waterside the gulls were

screaming overhead, while far out over the Forth, away from the shelter of the land, the merry white horses were prancing across to the shores of Fife. In the air was that delicious smell of fish blended with tar and seaweed which always set Andrew's pulse a-racing for the sea and for far-off lands of adventure.

At fifteen he was older for his age than most of his companions, though his slight wiry frame contrasted oddly with the heavy build of most of the boys in his own class at school. A rather long, oval-shaped face, olive complexion, glossy dark hair, and dreamy brown eyes gave one the impression of something a little foreign, an impression confirmed by the vivid gestures and the changing expression of those clear-cut features when he became excited and was carried away by emotion. A quick mind and a ready wit singled him out as a leader full of resource and invention in the out of school games, and a passion for truth at any price made him popular with all who knew him, though his habit of day-dreaming, a habit which seemed to be steadily growing on him, often brought down the wrath of Dominie Ogilvie, the hard-headed and heavy-handed teacher who by word and deed hammered

away at his gospel of common sense and the resolute facing of the hard facts of everyday life as it must come to his pupils when they left school and went into the workaday world.

Andrew sat on the jetty at Leith on that April afternoon in the year 1821, his legs dangling over the edge, watching a weather-beaten brig with a long bowsprit pointed aloft and a large white patch in her mainsail of dirty grey, working her way into the harbour. A breach in her bulwarks and the shattered timber of a small boat hanging grotesquely in the davits told their own tale of heavy weather coming up the North Sea.

Close-hauled on the starboard tack, the little vessel swept past the end of the jetty. With a rattle of blocks and a flapping of canvas she went about, hung for a few moments in the wind as the sails filled again, heeled over as though making a graceful curtsy, and slipped off on the other tack. Andrew heard the rumble of orders from the poop, saw the topgallant sails fly, and the figures of men going aloft to stow the canvas.

Again she came about, topsails were clewed up, jibs let fly, and the foresail clinked down the stay as they pulled at the downhaul.

The steersman brought her into the wind, yards were backed, the jibs lay on the jib-boom, a white mass of billowing fury which two of the hands struggled to subdue and stow away.

Like a bird coming to rest after a long flight, the little vessel under bare steering way glided past the head of the jetty into the smooth water of the harbour.

Andrew's eyes sparkled, and his face lit up with excitement. This was luck indeed, and well worth the six good swishes of the tawse he knew would be waiting for him to-morrow morning. He rose to his feet, following the brig down the jetty. He must be in at the mooring; even, if fortune was kind, lend a hand to pass the great ropes round the bollards on the quay-side.

He read the name on the stern as the little vessel, losing way, edged in to the quay: *Jane*, Gibraltar. He guessed she would be about 100 tons burden, quite a large ship in these days, when the port of Leith seemed to be used only by the fishing-boats and coastal trade schooners. His vivid imagination pictured her fighting her way up across the Bay, through the Channel, and up the North Sea. He recalled that night a

week ago when he lay awake listening to the skirl of the east wind over the roofs and chimney-pots. It must have been gey wild weather, he thought, out yonder off the grim cliffs of the east coast, and he wondered if the *Jane* had lost her boat that night and had her bulwarks breached.

She had a big sweep out now and was being manœuvred in alongside. In the waist stood a burly man with a fierce red beard, a coil of rope swinging in his right hand. As Andrew came abreast of the brig figures came running from the shore-end of the jetty. The arrival of the *Jane* had been unexpected, and not until she was in the harbour had old Tam Macilwain the harbourmaster realized that she was entering port.

The bearded man gave a hoarse yell, then lifting his arm flung the line in graceful curving rings towards the shore. Like a living thing the rope coiled over Andrew's head. He lifted his arm and, miraculously it seemed, his hand grasped the shining hard surface of the light manila line.

" Haul awa', laddie, haul awa' ! That's fine. Hand ower hand wi' it."

Andrew hauled with a will, and with a hissing splash the great loop of the heavy mooring rope fell into the water from the bows of the brig. By this time willing hands had taken a share in the hauling, and in a few moments the hairy dripping end of brown rope peered over the quayside like the head of some fabulous sea-monster.

Another line had by this time been flung from aft, and ten minutes later the *Jane* lay moored against the grey stone quay, two wrinkled fenders creaking in protest as the graceful hull snuggled lovingly against the solid masonry.

Greetings were flung back and forth, and the boy listened breathlessly to the disjointed snatches of the story of the stormy voyage from Xeres in Portugal to Plymouth, and on to Leith ; six full weeks with head winds nearly all the way, and fog at the entrance of the Channel. The crew looked dirty and dishevelled, as indeed they well might, for there could have been but little time aboard the *Jane* for the niceties of toilet. Seven men all told, some of them foreigners, though English was the common language. On the poop he saw the captain, a tall, broad-shouldered man with a quiet dignity

in keeping with his position, who gave his orders in a calm firm way, in striking contrast to the excited jabbering of one or two of the unwashed and unshaven seamen who carried them out.

"A good man," thought the boy. "A fine man to have for captain on your first voyage, and one who'd no be scared in face of any danger."

Interest in the new arrival was now wearing off, and when the decks had been cleared and the sails stowed, the captain gave orders to the crew to go below and get food and rest. A grimy little man whom the others called François was evidently the cook, for he had left the clearing up of the ropes and gear to the rest and had made his way to the tiny galley amidships as soon as the brig had been made fast.

Andrew remained seated on the stone bollard over which the stern mooring had been cast, his mind far away in the warm tropics. He pictured himself the master of just such another little vessel as the *Jane*, only newer and smarter, gleaming in white paintwork and polished brass, with snowy sails without patches, and a trim clean crew of Scottish seamen.

He started going over the names of all the

boys he knew in Leith and selecting his crew from them. There was Jamie Dalrymple, a fair terror at football, with burly shoulders like a bull and a great shock of fiery red hair ; he'd make a fine first mate, would Jamie. Then there was little Jock Neilson, who loved to stuff his pockets with potatoes and bake them over a fire of wood embers out on the braeside ; Jock, of course, would be the cook and bake fine big floury potatoes in the galley. There was Tam Macallister, long and lean, whose freckled face wore a perpetual smile ; it would be fine to have that smile by your side when it was blowing hard on to a lee shore with the roar of breakers growing louder every minute——

" Better down here than at school, eh ? "

Andrew came back to reality with a jerk, and looking down at the deck of the *Jane* below him found himself looking into the eyes of the captain, who was smiling up at him.

The bluest eyes he had ever seen, he said to himself, as blue as the water out beyond the Bass on a summer day, with a network of tiny wrinkles on each side of them from constant looking out on the far distances of the sea. He was dressed in knee-breeches stained with salt

" Better down here than at school, eh ? "

water and very much the worse for wear, a tight-fitting green jacket, and a black hat. Somehow he had found time to shave and wash, and as he stood there smiling pleasantly up at him, the truant again felt instinctively that here was a man to whom he could give his trust and loyalty in full measure.

" I'm taking a holiday the day, sir," he said rather guiltily as he returned the smile.

"Taking something that's not your own to take, eh?" said the captain quietly.

"I'll be paying for it in full the morn," answered Andrew, a note of defiance in his young voice.

The captain threw back his head and burst into a roar of laughter.

"Good for you, boy. You've learnt early that you can't have a good time in this life without paying the price, and that's a better lesson than ever you'll learn from your books at school."

A shadow seemed to pass over the laughing eyes of the captain, as though he had learnt that lesson in the bitter school of hard experience.

"As you're your own master this afternoon, perhaps you'll help me to find the man I'm looking for. Do you know a lawyer called Robert Camelier here in Leith?"

Andrew's heart gave a sudden jump. He was tempted for a moment to deny any knowledge of his own father. As he hesitated, he had the strange feeling that some great issue hung on his telling the truth. In any case, he found it was impossible to be anything but truthful to this new friend, who seemed to be able to read his thoughts before they were uttered.

" I ken him fine, sir. He's my own father, and we live up yonder in Kirk Street. Ye'll be wanting to see him the now ? "

" The sooner the better. But he'll know you've not been at school if you take me to him."

" He'll ken fine the morn. Dominie 'll be sending him round a wee note telling him how many he gave me with the tawse."

Andrew slipped off the bollard on which he had been sitting.

" If ye're in a hurry we'll be starting right now."

The captain put his fingers to his lips and let out a shrill whistle. From the fo'c'sle hatch appeared the figure of the big red-bearded man who had flung the rope which Andrew had caught.

" Get the ladder, Smith," said the captain in his gentle tone of command.

" Aye, aye, sir," answered the man in a deep booming voice, and with a cheerful grin at Andrew as he turned to obey.

He dived back into the fo'c'sle, reappearing almost immediately with a short ladder, which he planted firmly on the deck with the other end reaching above the coping of the quay.

The captain climbed to the quay.

"And now, Master Camelier, I'll be obliged if you'll take me to your father, and we can have a yarn as we go along."

CHAPTER II

A LETTER FROM GIBRALTAR

ROBERT CAMELIER the lawyer was the son of one Artolio Camelier, a native of Malta, who had fled from that island in the year 1779, to avoid imprisonment by the Turks for complicity in a plot against the Government.

Artolio had settled down in Leith as a leather merchant, married Jean Jamieson in 1783, and died a comparatively wealthy man in 1800, leaving his only son Robert articled to the firm of MacGregor & Graham, solicitors of Queen Street, Edinburgh. Robert had inherited his father's business acumen as well as his mother's puritanical strictness, and setting up in practice in Leith he soon had a finger in many little affairs of finance over the water, gaining while still a very young man a reputation for shrewdness and secrecy which made him highly respected if little loved among his neighbours in the little port.

He had, strangely enough as it seemed to those who knew him, married a beautiful girl, Jessie Mackinlay, who had come from Aberdeen with her father on a matter of business with the young lawyer.

What the exact nature of that business was no one except the principals seemed to know, though there were many ill-natured guesses at the hold Camelier had over the feckless Laird Mackinlay when it was announced that the marriage was to take place.

It was doubtful if any one believed that Jessie was in love with Robert, but it was certain that she remained loyal to her hard-grained husband, and never by word or deed showed her regret at the change from the big rambling house at Aberdeen, as the spoilt child of an easy-going father, to the narrow, joyless existence in the gloomy dwelling in Kirk Street, Leith, as the wife of a man who seemed to grow more hard and secretive every year.

The one bright spot in her drab life was her little son Andrew, born in the year 1806. With a quiet, and for the most part unspoken, determination she refused to allow her husband to have a hand in his upbringing. She encouraged

the boy in outdoor pastimes, and taught him to love the open air, the birds, and the wild animals of the countryside. She shielded him from the anger of her husband, brought dainties to his bedroom when he was sent there for some childish escapade, and poured out upon the sleek dark head of her only child the pent-up love which was now denied other outlet. In return Andrew gave her the love for which she longed. His mother became his confidante and ally, to her alone he divulged those glorious day-dreams of adventure in foreign lands, while she, because she feared more than aught else in the world that he would follow the profession of his father, did naught to check those fantasies which, at least, kept his mind from the dusty office downstairs looking out on the narrow cobbled street.

On this Monday afternoon in April, Robert Camelier sat in his office reading for the twentieth time a letter brought by packet boat from Flushing to London and thence overland four weeks ago.

His thin lips were tightly compressed, and he scowled at the innocent piece of parchment as

though he found it an object of intense dislike. By devious ways, passing through many hands in its long journey, the letter had come from Gibraltar, penned in the cramped script of one Señor Manoel de Andrada Sylva, the Spanish Jew who weaved his tortuous webs from his little dark den in a crumbling house in Crutchetts Ramp, a winding narrow lane which climbs steeply up from Main Street, with its bedraggled houses clinging precariously to the sheer rock which hems them in.

The lawyer glared fiercely at the signature which ran half-way across the last page, as though the writer, having written the body of the letter with the pursed lips and stiff hand of concentrated effort, had on reaching the end allowed body and mind to relax, and scrawled his name at the foot with a large gesture of relief.

It was not that Robert Camelier had any qualms about the legitimacy of the business proposed by Sylva, or that he doubted his ability to carry it through. Instinctively he felt that there was more behind it than was made clear by the letter he now knew almost by heart. At the best it was dabbling in matters

of high politics, and at the worst (and knowing his man, the lawyer guessed some crooked game) the putting of his head into a noose for what might even amount to piracy on the high seas.

He was, however, too shrewd a man, and too encased in his love for money, to think of refusing. It would be unwise too, he argued, to quarrel with Sylva, who, if rumour did not lie, was a trusted agent of the great house of Rothschild, at whose nod crowns and kingdoms rose and fell.

The instructions contained in the letter were clear and concise. They concerned a certain shipment of oil and beeswax from Gibraltar in the brig *Jane*, Captain Johnson. In addition to this innocent cargo, treasure was to be shipped in the shape of good Spanish dollars. Though the secret of the silver was to be guarded, the destination was a lawful one, but one to be reached only through the hazard of a blockade.

So far the business sounded fair enough, and the name Robert Camelier was only to appear in the ship's papers as the consigner of so many hogsheads of beeswax, and part owner of the *Jane*, which details would be seen to at Gibraltar, the port of shipment, by Sylva himself.

It was the concluding paragraph of the letter which hinted that the Jew had some sinister purpose in the business.

Picking up the letter from the desk in front of him, the lawyer read the words again :

" It will be obvious to you that together with the risk of capture by the enemy, there are other dangers of a kind which I will not specify, which may well lead to the money failing to reach its destination. Such eventualities may well accrue to our mutual advantage. As part owner of the brig you will be entitled to a generous share of any such profit from our venture."

With a feeling of profound uneasiness he laid the letter down. The *Jane* was due at any time now, and little as he liked the affair, and in spite of a growing intuition that the business would turn out badly for himself, he knew that he would go through with it, and take his share of the responsibility in engaging the master of the brig and his crew upon a voyage which involved danger and uncertainty at both ends with more than a hint of treachery by Don Sylva.

If all went well this time he vowed he would break away from Sylva, and withdraw finally from any dealings which were not strictly above board. Lately his conscience had been

telling him that his love for intrigue and money was leading him along paths that ill became a member of an honourable profession. If Sylva had some deep-laid plan to gain possession of the dollars, and his own share were to become known, it would mean ruin and disgrace.

His gloomy forebodings were interrupted by the sound of footsteps approaching along the cobbled street. He slipped the letter into a drawer, spread some papers in front of him, and took up a quill pen from the rack on the desk.

The steps paused at the front door, which was opened from without, and came along the passage. A light knock at the door, and to his carefully modulated " come in," there entered his son Andrew, pale but very collected, followed by a tall, fresh-complexioned man whose dress and bearing proclaimed him to be a seaman.

Andrew met his father's astonished glance with a slightly defiant throwing back of his head. In the perfectly respectful yet vaguely aloof tone which both he and his mother used in addressing the head of the house, he announced—

" Captain Johnson of the brig *Jane*, father, to see you on important business."

CHAPTER III

A FAMILY STORM

THE appearance of his son with the very man about whom he had been thinking, coming as it did on the heels of his dislike for the business which brought the English captain to Leith, proved too much for Mr. Camelier's nerves.

"And what might ye be doing here when ye ought to be along at school?" he demanded harshly. "Dodging your books again and wummering aboot the streets."

Andrew met his father's angry look with the same direct and level glance as before, which, because it reminded the lawyer of Jessie's father, always gave him an uncomfortable feeling of moral inferiority.

"I just stayed awa' from school the day, father, and I was down on the quayside——"

"Your boy gave us a hand to get alongside, sir, and very obligingly offered to bring me to

" And what might ye be doing here ? "

see you," broke in Captain Johnson, who was anxious to make his young friend's self-imposed task of facing his father as easy as possible.

Mr. Camelier thrust back his chair and rose to his feet. The knowledge had been steadily growing upon him that his wife despised the barely concealed chicanery involved in his financial transactions, and he had been increasingly careful to hide from her and from the boy any details which might seem to justify this

attitude. The bare suggestion that Andrew might have some inkling of what was afoot and of the object of the captain's visit brought his simmering anger to a head.

"What's that ye say?" he rasped; "met you at the quayside, you say?"

He moved round the table and strode fiercely towards his son, who was slightly in advance of the captain.

"And how did ye ken that the *Jane* would come in the day? And what has the arrival of the *Jane* to do with you, ye young scallywag, running the streets like a wild keely when ye should be in school? Would ye spy on matters of your father's business, and no doubt run with tales to your——"

"A fine sense of justice for a lawyer, and a bonnie example for the boy, with your talk of spying, Robert Camelier."

Mr. Camelier raised his head with a start and looked towards the door. Andrew kept his unwavering glance on his father, while Captain Johnson spun round on his heels at the first sound of the rich musical voice which, though scarcely raised above the level of ordinary conversation, was vibrant with scorn.

Jessie Camelier stood there meeting her husband's fury with calm contempt. Scorn had brought the colour to her cheeks, and with her soft brown hair caught up at the nape of her neck showing the graceful poise of the head, her large grey eyes, and firm red mouth, she made an irresistible appeal to the admiring chivalry of the English captain.

For a moment the lawyer was too taken aback to find his voice. The fact that this proud woman who had been willing to marry him to save her father from complete financial ruin, and who for seventeen years had never openly withstood him, or even argued with him, was standing quietly on the threshold of his own office rebuking him fearlessly before their son and this English captain seemed to shake the very foundations on which his life had been built.

It was the captain who first broke the silence which followed the intervention of Mistress Camelier.

" Our meeting was the purest chance, sir," he said, once more striving to pour oil on the domestic waters which seemed so troubled with so little apparent cause.

" Your son has confessed to playing truant," he went on; " he loves the sea, it appears, and what more natural than that he should be on the quayside, or that he should bear a hand in warping the brig alongside ? Seeing him there I asked him if he knew of a Mr. Robert Camelier, with whom I had business. As for the nature of that business, he knows no more "—the Englishman paused with a hint of dry humour in his blue eyes—" he knows no more than I do, which is precisely nothing."

If Robert Camelier had not been overwrought and carried away by his anger he would have realized that he had gone too far, and that his very attitude was calculated to arouse the suspicion he was anxious to allay. But the resentment he had felt against Sylva the Jew had been fed by the arrival of Captain Johnson and Andrew, while the scathing contempt which lay behind his wife's calm words, a contempt which in his secret heart he knew was deserved, seemed to sweep away all vestige of self-control. Here at least was a challenge to his just authority, an act of open defiance, committed not in the privacy of the family circle, but in the presence of a witness, one who was now

his own servant, and who openly ranged himself against his employer.

With his eyes blazing with anger, Robert Camelier swept aside his son, and brushing past Captain Johnson faced his wife. In his rage he unconsciously fell into the broad Scots which he had always been at such pains to eliminate from his speech in dealing with his clients.

"Wad ye interfere, woman?" he almost screeched, his mouth working convulsively, his whole body trembling with passion. "It's to his mither that the young wastrel owes sic notions, wi' his flouting of his ain father, and wanderin' the streets when he should be learning tae apply himsel' at schule. Because I tuk ye from poverty an' made a fine lady of ye, ye've grown to think yersel' too guid for the man that saved Donald Mackinlay from the bailiffs. I ken fine what ye'd be thinkin' o' me and my ways of earning the bread ye eat, but ye're no too proud to waste it on silk and satins and English fal-lals."

He paused for breath, glaring in turn at his wife and son, and completely ignoring Captain Johnson, who, deeply embarrassed, was wondering whether he should retire to the brig and

come back later on when the storm had blown itself out.

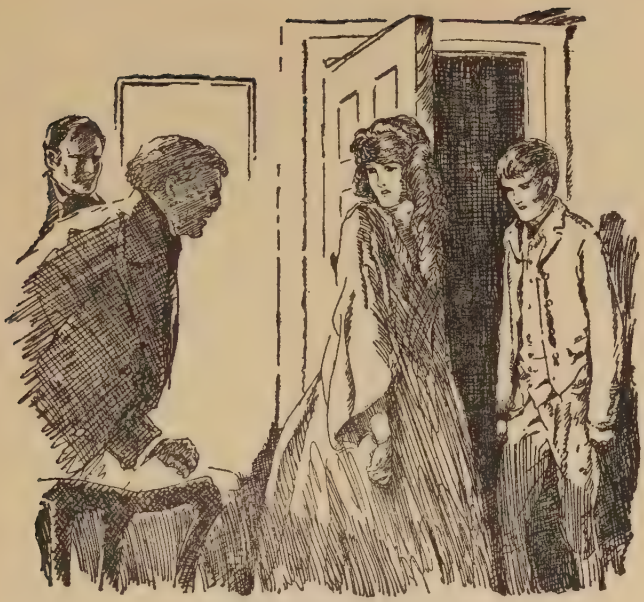
" Ye'd defy me to ma face, wad ye ? " panted the lawyer. " Weel, ye'll dae it withoot the boy learning from ye tae do the same. He'll go tae Edinburgh and live wi' ma ain mither, since his mither canna train him tae respect his faither. He'll go tae Hanover Square and attend the High Schule, and when the time's come he'll be articled tae Davidson's and learn the trade of the law which ye are too high and michty tae approve of, though I'm thinkin' it's a puir lawyer he'll mak', the puir whimperin' loon. But he'll no mouch roond the quayside poking his nose into ither folks' business."

Lack of breath again made him pause, and he now made a belated effort to conclude the affair with some show of dignity.

" There canna be twa masters in this hoose, and when I give orders I'll make sure they're carried out."

" Andrew 'll no go to your mother, Robert," said Mistress Camelier quietly. " She's a good woman, I ken fine, but——"

" He'll go juist where I bid him," replied the lawyer, feeling at last that he had justification



" He'll go juist where I bid him."

in full for showing his authority. " Andrew, get ye tae your room and tae bed. To-morrow ye'll go back tae Dominie Ogilvie, until I can arrange with your gran' to have ye in Hanover Square."

" Yes, Andrew, go to your room," said his mother in the same quiet voice, which rang in her husband's ear like tempered steel.

She turned to her husband again as Andrew left the room.

" Andrew 'll no go to Edinburgh, Robert,"

she repeated, meeting his glance with a quiet dignity and assurance which made every word carry conviction, and turning her back on him, she followed Andrew up the bare wooden stairs to his little attic.

CHAPTER IV

" MAGIC CASEMENTS "

FROM his little dormer window in the attic, Andrew could catch a glimpse of the changing waters of the Forth—a tiny square of precious, ever-changing seascape framed in grey slate roofs and brown chimney-pots.

It was now nearly a year ago that, idling alone in his mother's boudoir, he had picked up a slender volume which he found lying face downward on the sofa where Mistress Camelier had left it. Turning the pages, mildly curious to see what his mother had been reading, he was on the point of tossing it aside as being too dull and grown-up, when two lines seemed to detach themselves from the printed page and burst into his consciousness like words of flame :

> " Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

He stood there as in a dream, with the delicious music of the words sounding in his ears like some enchanted melody. Softly he repeated the words to himself, and stole quietly upstairs to his tiny attic.

Henceforth his dingy little window, spotted and streaked with dust and raindrops, would be his " charmed magic casement," from which he would gaze out on the sparkling waters of perilous seas ; the distant shores of Fife became those " faery lands forlorn."

This afternoon, trembling with mingled fear and resentment at the strange anger of his father, feeling also that at all costs he should have stayed by his mother's side instead of leaving her to face that anger out alone, he went to the window, and leaning on his elbows, peered out northward through the gap in the roofs and became lost once more in dreams of the faery land that to-day seemed forlorn indeed.

Somehow the dreams seemed more real to-day. He had met his hero, the blue-eyed sturdy English captain who had listened to his eager boyish chatter as they clattered along the quay and up the cobbled streets. Andrew, too, had listened to the grave voice telling him of

distant lands and perils faced and overcome on board the gallant little *Jane*. With the events of the last half-hour forgotten, he gazed out through his magic casement, his imagination out-leaping his eyes until he saw the *Jane*, with all sails drawing to a soft land breeze from a palm-clad beach, stealing in close-hauled towards the opening in the coral reef on which the thundering surf foamed away to port and starboard as far as the eye could reach.

The bright new *Jane* she was, already pictured down there on the jetty as she went about to make the harbour, painted in dazzling white, and clad in snowy canvas, curtsying decorously to the merry laughing little waves that sang past her counter and danced away astern. On the tiny poop stood Captain Johnson, his blue eyes puckered up, his mouth set in a firm straight line as he picked out the passage through the reef which should bring them into the still waters of the lagoon beyond.

All the strange exotic scents of spice and orange were wafted out to them beyond the sparkling rainbows of the far-flung surf, and Andrew thrilled with excitement as he wondered what lay beyond the warm soft sand of the lagoon

and the fringe of palms which guarded the secrets of the island.

So wrapped was he in his day-dreaming that he did not hear light footsteps on the wooden stairs, or the sound of his door opening and as gently closing again.

Jessie Camelier crossed the room and stood for a moment behind Andrew, her heart overflowing with passionate love mingled with a cold grim fear that her only joy was to be taken from her. Again she steeled herself to fight this monstrous threat.

" He shall not go to Edinburgh," she vowed to herself, " for that would be worse than sending him beyond the seas."

Very gently she put her arms round his neck and drew the dark head to her cheek. The tears dimmed her eyes as she felt him snuggle closer to her breast.

The dream of tropic isles set in foam and waving palms faded as Andrew came back to the world. The present closed in upon him like a dark silent river of stagnant water, so different from the merry gold and blue of his day-dreaming. He seemed to hear again his

father's voice raised in ugly anger against his lovely mother whose arms were round him now, as ever since he could remember they had been round him in times of trouble.

Somehow it was his mother who was in trouble to-day, and it came to him that her trouble was deeper and more vital than his own ; that he must try to comfort and console her, and to soothe away the pain as she had so often done for him.

" Mother, mother, why was he so angered with you ? It was no your fault. If only I hadna stayed away from school to-day ! "

" Hush, little son of mine," she whispered, " we'll no mend matters by greeting. Your father's worried and sore with business troubles. It'll all be past the morning."

She stroked the smooth dark hair ; then holding his face between her two hands, she said so gently yet so kindly—

" But you'll no play truant again, Andrew ; promise me you'll go every day to school and grow up a fine scholar."

" Will father let me stay with you if I make a promise, think you, mother ? For I'll never gang to yon High School away from you as I'd

be from morn till night, and kirk all day on Sunday, with gran' worrying the life out o' me, an' "—Andrew's face lit up with a gleam of mischief—" an' she washing my hands feefty times a day and all."

" You must go to him the morn, Andrew, and say you're sorry, and maybe he'll forgive you if you promise not to play truant again."

Andrew turned and gazed once more out of the window, his eyes fixed on the narrow strip of water now changing from blue to purple as the sun crept down towards the west.

" Aye, and forbye he'll say as he's said before, that he'll no change his mind once it's fixed."

He turned to his mother with a passion of urgency that she had never seen before.

" If father no changes his mind, you'll no change yours, mother ? Ye'll no let him send me to Edinburgh ? I'd sooner be dead than cooped in yon great hoose with none but gran' and that old hag Martha."

He put his arms round his mother, and the tears which had been so close to his eyes came at last.

" Mother, let me go with Captain Johnson. He's a good man, and he likes me fine. I'll

make a heap of money and come home and fetch you away, mother, just us two, and we'll be so happy together."

Mistress Camelier sat down on the bed and drew her son down beside her.

" My place is here with your father, little son, for he'll be needing me sore the days that are coming. I've said you'll no go to Edinburgh, and I mean it. If your father 'll no change his mind, I'm no likely to change mine."

" But what will you do if he says I maun go to Edinburgh ? How will you keep me here then ? " said Andrew hopelessly.

For a moment Mistress Camelier was silent, thinking how strange was the way in which, after all these years, she had to-day been brought face to face with the crisis of her married life. She had passed her word to Andrew, and she must now stand by her promise. There was no going back now. If her boy went to Edinburgh she would prove weak and false in his eyes. She knew she must win this fight, that she must show herself as firm as her husband. While she shrank from the possible result of open defiance, she none the less knew that she must accept the challenge.

" If we can no make him change his mind, we'll see what Captain Johnson has to say," she smiled through her tears, and already her promise sounded like a death-knell in her ears.

" And now, wee laddie, I'll be getting down to see about supper. Meg will bring up a bite for you, and then just get to bed and sleep sound. Troubles are always lighter in the morn. Good-night, and God bless you, my little son."

Andrew clung to his mother as he kissed her good-night, and held the door open for her to go. He crossed slowly to the window and watched the evening shadows creep out over the strip of water. His dreams were changed now, and the blue sunlit seas were gone. It was a wild grey day he pictured, with a north-east wind piling up the cruel short seas to windward. The *Jane* was staggering along under reefed topsails and storm foresail, and when he looked on the poop for the figure of his captain he found it empty save for the man at the wheel, a sinister figure of great breadth of shoulder, with a scar running down his left cheek. As the steersman withdrew his eyes from the luff of the mizzen topsail, they fell upon Andrew with a look of mingled fear and cruelty.

With a shudder Andrew closed his eyes and turned away. When he looked again over the roofs night had fallen, shutting out the Firth and the vision of the brig.

A gleam of light shone under his door, and old Meg appeared carrying a tray of good things for his supper and a candle to give him light to eat them by.

CHAPTER V

THE DIE IS CAST

DINNER was a silent meal that night in the dimly-lighted dining-room at Kirk Street. Camelier was silent and morose, avoiding his wife's eyes and making no attempt to entertain his guest. Captain Johnson, for his part, after exchanging civilities with Mistress Camelier, had lapsed into silence. Not only did he feel the atmosphere of brooding hostility between man and wife, but, like all sailors, he was unskilled in the polite art of carrying on a conversation without material. He had small patience with the idle chatter tossed from mouth to mouth merely to pass away the time, and the loneliness which is the lot of the captain of even the smallest craft at sea, made silence as natural to him as the hum of voices to folk ashore.

Mistress Camelier was dreading the interview which she was determined to have with her

husband that night, wondering what weak spot she might find in the wall of sullen obstinacy which Robert Camelier was wont to build up around his own opinion and his orders once given. She felt an impending sense of misfortune which was to affect her beloved Andrew, and her Highland blood, while steeling her to fight to the last, also warned her that no efforts of her own could ward off the stroke which was fated to fall upon her.

The oppressive meal at an end, she rose, and bowing to their guest, who had also risen and opened the door for her, she went to her own boudoir until the time came for her to make a last desperate bid to alter the sentence of exile passed upon her son.

For a few moments the two men remained silent. The lawyer passed the port to his companion, but showed no sign of beginning the conversation.

Robert Camelier held his glass of wine up to the light of one of the tall candlesticks which stood in the centre of the table, took a sip which he rolled lovingly over his palate, and at length came to the real purpose of Captain Johnson's visit.

" You've no objection, I take it, captain," he said, deliberately making his tone as light as possible, " to carrying a cargo of silver dollars from Gibraltar to Bahia on behalf of the Government of Portugal ? "

Captain Johnson took a sip of wine in order to gain time. He knew that Portugal was in the throes of a revolution, and that the seat of Government had been shifted from Lisbon to Bahia in the Brazils. He had also been told in Plymouth that the Brazilians were in revolt, and were determined to follow the example of the other South American countries and gain their independence.

" I've no objection to taking an honest cargo anywhere, sir," he said, " though I've no wish to get mixed up in the politics of Brazil or of any other of those plaguy little South American countries."

" You'll no be mixing in politics, captain. I'm advised that a Portuguese warship will meet you off the river and escort you to Bahia. There you'll unload the dollars, pick up any cargo you may find, and sail for Europe."

The captain did not reply for a moment. In spite of, or was it because of, the light way in

' I've no objection to taking an honest cargo anywhere.'

which his new owner was treating the matter, there was something about the business he did not like.

" If it's a fair business matter with the Portuguese Government, there'll be no need for secrecy, sir ? "

" There'll be every need in the world, captain. If the rebels get wind of it, there may be trouble for you. They've got agents everywhere, for they've got the backing of many a

rich house of roguish financiers on this side of the Atlantic."

He paused and looked shrewdly across the table at his guest, wondering how far this honest, unassuming Englishman believed the affair to be as simple as he would have him believe.

"You'll be loading a cargo of oil, olives, paper, and beeswax for they Papisher candles, and maybe raisins. You'll sail by night from Gibraltar, and a fishing-boat will meet you in the Straits and tranship the dollars to the *Jane*."

The captain's sense of uneasiness deepened. Not for a moment did he suspect that Camelier and Sylva were not acting as the accredited agents for the Portuguese Government. His unsuspicious and open mind was ready to accept his employers' word, as he expected them to accept his own. But this carrying across the Atlantic a cargo of silver dollars for delivery to a Government that might have ceased to exist before he sighted the American coast was not the sort of traffic upon which he would choose to risk his beloved ship and his crew.

Times, however, were none too good. He

had a wife and two small girls living at Plymouth, and if he refused to make the voyage there were plenty of other capable men who would be glad to step into his shoes and take over command of the *Jane*.

" Very good, sir," he said quietly ; " you may depend upon my carrying out your orders to the best of my ability."

He rose to his feet.

" If you'll excuse me, I will be getting down to the ship. I've had but little sleep for the past few weeks, and you'll want the cargo out of her as soon as possible."

" The sooner the better for us all, captain," said Camelier, speaking in a warmer and franker voice now that the matter was settled. " You'll be running over to Burntisland when you're empty and take a few tons of sand-ballast, for there's no cargo here in Leith these days. Come up again the morn, and we'll settle the details and get the ship's papers in order."

Having seen the captain out, the lawyer locked the front door, carefully snuffed out the candles in the dining-room, and lighting his

own silver candlestick in the hall made his way upstairs.

As he passed his wife's boudoir, he noticed that the door was ajar, and that the room was lighted. As he paused on the narrow landing, half inclined to go in and bid his wife good-night, she came to the door.

"Will you come in, Robert?" she said. "I'll be glad of a few minutes' talk with you."

She had chosen the battlefield of her own room deliberately. Her weapons seemed so weak, and the cold determination of her husband had so often beaten down her will, that she felt she must take even the small advantage offered her by meeting him on her own territory.

The lawyer entered the room and sat down on the sofa, first removing with a snort of contempt the small yellow-bound volume she had been trying to read while waiting for her husband's footsteps on the stair.

"It's about Andrew," she said at last, seeing that he was waiting for her to speak. "You'll no send him awa', Robert, when he's all I have to keep me company? He'll apologize to you to-morrow, and he's promised me not to play truant again. He's a good lad at heart, Robert,

though a bit wild like all boys. He's no so bad as to be sent from home like a wastrel."

" If I thought he was real bad, it's no to my own mother I'd be sending him. But it's yourself who's spoiling him here. He's too soft, and ower tied to your apron-strings to learn to be a man. Yon old fule, Dominie Ogilvie, says he canna tame him any more. It's a big schule he's wanting, and less softness at home, and it's that he'll be getting at Edinburgh with his gran'."

" He'll no be getting any love there, Robert," said his wife gently, " though plenty of hard knocks and discipline."

" If by love you mean coddling and spoiling, it's true he'll no be finding it at Hanover Square and the High School. But it's no that he's needing; he's had ower much of that already. It's time he learned to work and to obey, and stop his gowking and dreaming and all his namby-pamby weakness, which is all he's learning from you."

" If you had taken more trouble to know your own son, Robert, you'd ken he was no the weakling you make him out. He's true metal at heart is your boy."

She came over and stood in front of her husband for a moment, looking down at him. Then timidly she stretched out her hand and laid it on his shoulder.

" Robert," she said very gently, " I ken fine you loved me when you married me. I was sore and bitter at the time, for I thought you'd just bought me at the price of saving my father. Maybe my own bitterness and coldness killed the love you had for me. But I've tried to be a good wife to you, Robert, and I think if you'd let me I could have loved you after all. But you've been so hard, husband, you've been gey hard on the laddie, and him your only son. But it's not too late. If you'll let him stay it'll lift a load from me, and show me that you love me just a little still, Robert."

She knelt down by his side and took his hand, hoping wildly that even now she could win a place in the heart of her husband, and win him from his love of money.

" Let him stay with us, Robert. Can we no be happy together, the three of us ? "

For a moment Robert felt a queer tug at his heart. He recalled the day, seventeen years ago, when he had brought to this dingy old

house his beautiful bride; how, in spite of having won her by pressure on her feckless father, he had been prepared to love her if she would but let him. For a time he had thought he was succeeding. She had been more approachable, and when their son had been born, he believed she had almost learnt to love him in return. But he had been jealous of the adoration she had given to the helpless mite, and as he withdrew into the hard shell of aloof coldness by which he showed his displeasure at the constant love she showered upon their baby son, so she had seemed to welcome the separation as giving her more time to devote to Andrew. The gulf had widened until now they seemed even farther apart than during the first year of their marriage.

But he had lived too long in the atmosphere of coldness and suspicion, he was too hardened by years of bargaining and scheming, he had been too long a stranger to human love and the warmth of family life.

Stilling the voice of love in his heart, he was almost unconsciously searching his mind to find some reason for this sudden tenderness on the part of his wife. He found it all too ready

to hand in her endeavour to shake his purpose to send Andrew to his mother in Hanover Square. Little knowing what it was to mean to him, and to his wife and son, he hardened his heart to the appeal of the old love which she had just made.

He met her pleading with the look of mocking cynicism which always aroused her angry scorn.

" It's late to talk of love the now after all these years. It's easy for ye to talk of it when you'd beg a favour. If you'd show your love, it's a fine chance ye'll have when the boy's away in Edinbro'. You'll have more time for the house and for your husband without Andrew. We'll begin to talk of love when he's with his gran'."

Jessie rose from her knees, angry words upon her lips which she held back with difficulty. It was too late now for anger or for recrimination. She had appealed to her husband's love for her, and in the appealing had laid bare the secret of her heart, which had been a secret even to herself, that even now she might love him if only he would turn to her as she to him. She was almost afraid of that secret, came near to despising herself for it ; wondered at the weakness which admitted the possibility of love for a man

so blind to human tenderness, so deaf to the appeal of love.

Well, she had tried and failed. A glance at the mocking, still handsome face of her husband assured her of the futility of further appeal.

In spite of the anger in her heart and the despair in her soul, she felt a spring of pity for this lonely, hard-grained man, and she wondered whether he too would miss Andrew when he was far away: for she knew she must keep her promise, and send her little son away from her, and from Scotland.

Once more she laid her hand on her husband's shoulder, and again the still small voice of love came and went in his heart, again he steeled himself against it.

"Good-night, Robert," she said gently, and she left him sitting there alone.

CHAPTER VI

THE "JANE" SAILS

UNDER a clear starlit sky, with a steady breeze off-shore, Andrew sailed from Leith a week later in a small fishing-boat, under the care of Jock MacPherson, who, hailing from Aberdeen, could be trusted to keep his own counsel.

Mistress Camelier, a dim-cloaked figure, stood with tear-dimmed eyes at the end of the jetty. The little craft, a black shadow on the dark waters, leaving in her wake a line of pale phosphorescence as she headed out towards the Fife coast, was taking with it all that had made life bearable.

What it had cost her to carry out the promise to herself and Andrew she hardly yet dared to realize. Her heart was heavy within her at the prospect of the empty days and weeks which stretched before her. Of her husband's anger at the deception she had no fear. She was

She would never quarrel again with any living soul.

beyond all feeling of either fear or anger where Robert was concerned, for there was no room in her heart for aught but grief and bitter longing for the son she was sending away.

To-morrow she would break the news to his father, and bow her head to the inevitable storm of reproaches which must follow; but she would not quarrel. She would never quarrel again with any living soul, she sadly told herself standing there on the wooden jetty, for quarrels could lift no burdens, could ease no aching

hearts, nor fill an empty world of loneliness and grief.

She stood there striving to pierce the darkness which had swallowed up the tiny boat and her precious burden. The tide lapped ceaselessly at the base of the weed-hung piles, from the town behind her came the barking of some watchful dog, but seawards the wall of night shut her in from all she loved.

Shivering slightly, for the air was keen down here by the water, she drew her cloak more closely around her, and casting a last look in the direction of the farther shore as though to send out one more silent message of her longing and her love, she turned and made her way along the deserted quay, across the cobbled square, and noiselessly let herself into the unlighted house.

Closing the door gently behind her, she listened for any sign of movement, but no sound broke the stillness of the sleeping house save the steady ticking of the grandfather clock at the top of the landing above.

Quietly she stole up the stairs to her bedroom, resisting the temptation to climb farther and lay her head on the pillow upon which the cheek of Andrew had rested a short half-hour ago.

Not until dawn showed the pale square of her window did sleep come to her. Then at length exhaustion and grief brought momentary oblivion, from which she awoke unrefreshed to face the task before her of breaking to her husband the news that she had won over Captain Johnson, and that Andrew was bound for Gibraltar and the Brazils as ship's boy on board the *Jane*.

As she wearily dressed, watching the sun turn the pale morning sky to blue, the object of her longing was standing on the little poop of the *Jane*, his eyes agleam with joy, holding on with one hand to the weather shrouds, as the salt spray stung his cheek, and the freshening breeze sang through the rigging. The little craft heeling over to the wind was already off the Bass Rock, round which the seagulls screamed and wheeled in the morning sunshine.

In his heart was the tune of wind and sea. Behind him lay the days of idle dreaming, ahead the spirit of adventure beckoned him. Not yet had the shadow of the future dimmed the radiance of the high noon of romance. Life and youth were calling him that bright spring morning, and from his eyes were mercifully

veiled the spectres of treachery and lust of gold that were already forming on board the little vessel so gaily footing it over the radiant sea.

The night before he had been glad of the darkness which hid the tears he could not hold back as he clung to his mother back there on the jetty at Leith, but by the time the hull of the *Jane* loomed up ahead, and a voice from her deck hailed the fishing-boat, he would not have returned home had he been told that his father had relented, and that life might go on as before.

The flickering lanthorn held over the side, the scramble up the flimsy ladder, the little group of sailors on deck, with his hero, Captain Johnson, gripping his hand in welcome, breathed the very spirit of romance.

Once more the smell of tarry ropes and the faint acrid odour of canvas caught his breath and stirred his blood. He had gone straight down to the tiny space leading off the starboard side of the cabin, which, usually used as a store-room, had been cleared and rigged with a bunk to accommodate him.

To-morrow he would start his duties as cabin-boy; to-night the captain had ordered him to turn in and sleep, and he lay listening to the

hoarse orders, and the trampling of feet overhead as the sails were loosened and set and the anchor hoisted.

Gradually sinking into a delicious sleep he was vaguely aware of a rippling of water past the ship's side, and the gentle heeling over of his bunk. Dimly he reminded himself that they were under way, that his dreams were coming true. He was now part of this small community setting forth for lands across the sea. Behind him lay home and school and all that had seemed so unchangeable a part of his life. For good or evil every lifting to the swell running in from the open sea was bearing him into the unknown.

Mistress Camelier found her husband in the office next morning. At breakfast no word had been spoken of the *Jane*, nor did Mr. Camelier remark on Andrew's absence from the meal.

She waited until she judged he would have dealt with the correspondence of immediate importance before she knocked at the door and entered the office where she had first flung down the gauntlet ten days before.

Robert Camelier received her with frigid

politeness, and having asked her to sit down on the chair reserved for clients, gravely asked her reason for seeking the interview.

Stumbling a little at first, then gaining courage from the silence with which he listened to her, she told him everything: of her determination that Andrew should not go to Edinburgh, the hardly-won consent of Captain Johnson, the connivance of the old fisherman, the stealthy departure at midnight, her good-bye upon the jetty, and the dark shadow of the fishing-boat bearing Andrew out of her life.

"I'd promised him, Robert, and I'd vowed to myself that he should not go to Hanover Square. He's set on the sea, and Captain Johnson is a dependable man——"

She paused, not daring to look at him, wondering why he did not break out in angry reproach.

"Last night I watched him go with old Jock MacPherson to Burntisland, and by now he'll be out beyond the Bass."

Again she paused and waited, but still Mr. Camelier remained silent. Her voice broke a little as she finished the pitiful little tale of her dearly-won victory, and added—

"I think it's broken my heart, Robert, but that'll no bring him back to us. If you could just be kind to me, as you used to be, maybe life will mend itself, and the loneliness be more bearable."

Still no word from her husband, until summoning courage to look at him Mistress Camelier was amazed to see him leaning on his elbows on the table, his face buried in his hands, his whole attitude that of profound dejection.

When at last he raised his head and spoke, his voice was heavy and toneless, chilling her with nameless terror which struck at her heart as no scorn or anger could have done.

"Ye've likely sent the boy to his death, Jessie. Better my mother and the discipline you hated to think of for him, than yon wee vessel and the cargo she'll be carrying."

Silence fell again in the dingy office. Fear clutched at Jessie's heart as she waited for him to explain all that was involved by her successful defiance of his edict.

"Aye, the fault is mine," he said at last, "and I doubt you'll ever forgive me, lass, for the wrong I've done you both."

He turned to her white and strained, such

anguish in his face that her heart went out to him.

She rose from her chair and knelt in front of him as she had done the night she pleaded with him to change his mind. He took both her hands in his and looked long and searchingly into her eyes, and she read there a look of tenderness she had never seen before.

" You maun listen, Jessie, till I tell you what it means. Don't look at me while I tell you, for it's no easy task I have."

She bowed her head upon his knees, and waited for him to speak. His hands caressed the soft brown hair as he made his confession. Withholding nothing that might seem to accuse himself of greed or intrigue, he told her of the real mission of the *Jane*, of the shadow of double-dealing that must go with the little vessel, and of the evil passions that treasure must always arouse in the hearts of men who dealt with silver or with gold.

" Johnson, as you say, lass, is a guid and honest man, but there's evil in the heart of yon Jew. Danger at Gibraltar, danger on the high seas, aye, and danger before ever they reach the Brazils. Oh, Jessie, write me down a

villain and a fool, but dinna turn away from me. If you'd only loved me, as I hoped you would love me when we were married, we might have been so happy, and made our laddie happy too. Can you forgive me, lass, and learn to love me ? "

Reaching up she put her arms round him, her whole heart melting in pity and in a strange new feeling of aching tenderness.

" It's both of us need forgiveness, Robert, for we've been sae foolish and sae headstrong. Maybe I loved you all the time and didna ken it, Robert, but it's not too late even now. Our love will bring him back to us, for God would no punish two feeble creatures who have been so foolish as to let him go."

His arms were round her now, and he gently kissed the salt tears from her cheek.

" Dinna greet, lassie," he murmured awkwardly, " dinna greet. It may not be as bad as we think, and so long as Johnson is looking after him the bairn will no come to any harm."

Through the mist of tears and aching sorrow for her little son, Jessie Camelier found that love is not bound to any rigid channel. For the lost love on the sea that day she had found another love at home.

PART II

CHAPTER I

THE SONG OF THE OPEN SEA

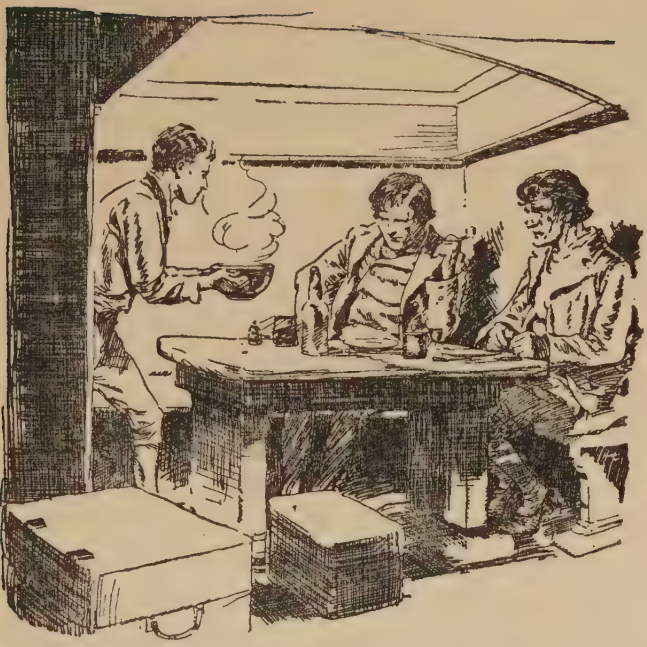
DOWN the coasts of Scotland and England, close hauled on the starboard tack, with reefed topsails, and the water foaming past a few inches from her gunwale, the *Jane* rushed south as though, conscious of her coming peril, she swooped to meet it that she might grapple and overcome these sinister designs against her honour.

By the time they were off the low-lying mud flats of the Essex coast, Andrew had found his sea legs, and settled down to the daily routine.

Most of his work lay under the poop in the tiny cabin and the little cubby hole that bore the name of " pantry." Sweeping and scrubbing out the cabin, polishing the brasswork, fetching the meals for the captain and mate from the galley, and washing up the dishes after he himself had eaten his meal, which consisted

of what the others had left, kept his day fully occupied, and sent him weary to his hard bunk at night. But at least he had his night's rest in full, when he could lie and listen to the wind howling through the rigging, the hoarse orders from the poop, the sound of heavy footsteps along the decks, and the cries of the sailors hauling on the braces, or tailing on to the topgallant-sail halyards as they hoisted them after a fierce gust had forced the captain to let everything fly.

If the life was less romantic than he had dreamed it would be, he was at least at sea with his new-found hero, who, though he kept a close eye on his cabin-boy, spoke little to him in those early days. He had reluctantly agreed to take Andrew with him, because he had felt unable to resist the pleadings of Mistress Camelier. But he had reproached himself ever since and wondered at the weakness which had led him to consent to burdening himself with an inexperienced boy on a voyage which held such possibilities of danger. That he had been drawn to this eager clean-limbed lad, seeing in his enthusiasm his own younger self thirty years ago, when he had run away from home and shipped on a big East-Indiaman in Plymouth



Fetching meals for the captain and mate.

Bay, seemed a mighty poor excuse now they were at sea. For him, too, the sea had seemed the home of romance, a sailor's life so far removed from the petty details of life on shore and the restraints of discipline. Well, he had learned before many months were passed that the restraints of ship-life were more galling than he had ever dreamed of ashore, and that the monotony of days and nights, with the sharp rim of the far horizon forming a charmed circle

ever holding the ship as the insignificant centre, was a poor exchange for the changing prospects of hill and moor and the red-tiled roofs nestling in the fragrant combes of Devon.

In the end the sea had gripped him as it had gripped many a man before, and had claimed his life and service ever since. He had vowed that never a son of his should leave the peaceful security of shore for uncertain monotony of the sea. He had even felt thankful that no son had been given him, and that his two children being girls could not follow his footsteps.

What weakness then had led him to be the cause of bringing to his cruel mistress the sea another victim? Was it selfishness? Was it because he had loved this boy as soon as he had set eyes on him sitting smiling on the bollards on Leith jetty, and, loving him, had been glad to have him with him? Or was it just weakness? Was it because he had been unable to resist the pleadings of the boy's mother? How much had his consent owed to his satisfaction of defeating that hard-faced lawyer, of holding the son as hostage for the safe voyage of the *Jane*?

As the *Jane* roared down the North Sea, he vented his wrath against himself by cracking

on all the canvas the stout little vessel could hold, refusing to shorten down till the last minute, ignoring the protests of Heanan the mate, who, under his respectful manner, plainly showed his disapproval of risking the loss of sails or spars. For the same reason too he held aloof from Andrew, giving him " good-morning " and " good-night," but passing him with averted gaze during the rest of the day.

Andrew was too occupied with his new life to notice the change in manner, or if he did so put it down to the new relationship between the captain and the cabin-boy.

It was, therefore, with no feeling of resentment that he obeyed Captain Johnson's order to return to the saloon when he finished washing the supper dishes one evening about a week after leaving Burntisland. They had cleared the Forelands now, and the weather had changed for the better. An easterly slant gave them a fair wind down Channel, and with the wind off the quarter, the brig was slipping quietly through the water with all sail drawing.

Having tidied up the tiny pantry and put the dishes away, Andrew came back into the cabin, where the captain was still sitting as he had left

him, at the head of the little table which ran fore and aft nearly the whole length of the room. An oil lamp swung gently from the deck overhead, and blue spirals of pungent smoke curled upwards from the clay pipe between the lips of the master.

"Sit down, Andrew," he said, without taking his pipe out of his mouth or his eyes from the lamp swaying beneath the skylight. "And how do you like the life, now you're part of it? Still find it romantic?"

"I'm no saying washing up the ashettes is ower romantic, sir," said Andrew, sitting down at the after end of the table. "I'd be happier out on the deck working the ship. But it's better than Hanover Square, I'm thinking."

Captain Johnson brought his eyes down from the lamp and held Andrew's, which met his look with the same frank goodwill which had drawn the Englishman to him on the day the *Jane* entered Leith Harbour.

"You've been better below in the weather we've been having," the captain answered. "But I sent for you to say that, now you've found your sea legs, it's time you learnt some sailoring. You'll be on deck from eight to

twelve every morning now, and no doubt Mr. Heanan will find plenty for you to do."

"That'll be fine, sir; and can I climb the masts, and help furl the sails?" said Andrew happily. "I've climbed mony a tree along the banks o' Leith Water, I should no be scared of they rope ladders."

The captain smiled, remembering the thrill of his own first going aloft so many years ago.

"You'll get your fill of that, if you stay at sea, Andrew, but you'll find the masts are not rooted in firm ground like those trees. I'll send a hand up with you the first time, though I went up to the royal yard my second day out of Plymouth, with a rope's end waiting for me if I didn't get there. Well, you'll have your watch on deck, and François shall do your work here, as he used to do before we shipped a cabin-boy. And now, Andrew, you'd better turn in."

He rose from his seat and knocked the dollop of his pipe out into the palm of his hand. "Good-night, Andrew; I'll take you ashore at Gibraltar for a leg-stretch," he added, feeling that he had been abrupt and almost unfriendly.

Andrew rose, and hesitated. "I'm no verra taken wi' yon Frenchie," he said at last. "He'll

no look you in the eyes, but he's got the look of a——" Andrew again hesitated. "He looks like a rat Jamie Dalrymple and me once drove into a corner in his wash-house—and he kens English a gey sight more than he lets on. I'd no trust him verra far, sir."

Captain Johnson looked at Andrew in surprise.

"The cook seems all right as a cook," he replied, "and as long as he does his work his eyes won't worry me, or his language either." He laid his hand on Andrew's shoulder. "Don't you start bothering about the looks of the crew, Andrew; you've got to take all sorts at sea, and it's ill to judge a man by his face."

"I'd no trust him all the same," repeated Andrew doggedly; then seeing that the captain disapproved of his criticism of the cook, he smiled cheerfully. "Good-night, sir, and I'm glad to be doing a sailor's work the morn."

Left alone, the captain dropped the burnt-out tobacco which still lay in his hand into the spittoon, and thoughtfully cut up another pipeful.

His open nature hesitated to think evil of any man until he had proof of his villainy, but some-

how Andrew's judgment on the French cook left him with a vague uneasiness. The thought of the precious cargo the *Jane* was to take aboard, the knowledge of the plots and counter-plots in which Portugal was involved with her South American colony, and the added responsibility of carrying the son of Robert Camelier on his first voyage, caused him to pay greater attention to the prophetic words of Andrew than he would have done under different circumstances.

He filled his pipe from the tobacco he had just cut up in his hand, and ran over the names of his crew. There was Peter Heanan, the mate, an Englishman, not a prepossessing specimen of his race, combining an immense breadth of shoulder with a soft cat-like tread and a respectful—too respectful—manner. A deep uneven scar running down the left cheek gave the man a sinister appearance, while it forbade the captain from passing judgment on a cast of countenance that might be the result of an accident. Robert Strachan and Peter Smith, Scotsmen from Montrose and bosom friends. His heart warmed towards these two. Good sailors, cheerful, loyal, and as honest as the day.

If trouble came they at least could be depended on. James Patterson, grizzled and wrinkled from many years at sea. A big, silent man was James Patterson. A difficult man to know with any intimacy, but a good man to have with you in trouble. Johanna Dhura, known on board as John Hard, describing himself as an Italian, sallow and furtive, a fit companion for François, the cook, thought the captain. Dhura and François, say, capable of causing trouble; Heanan uncertain; Smith, Strachan, and Patterson sound; himself and Andrew. No, the dice would be too heavily loaded against any treachery. With a sigh of relief, Captain Johnson lit his pipe and went on deck.

It was a perfect spring night. Abeam the loom of the land showed up against a sky bright with stars. The swish of the bows pushing back the strong flood tide setting up Channel, and the chortle of the waves running past the counter, the sense of security and peace, and the sight of the English land to starboard, vanquished the last feeling of uneasiness. Pacing the little poop, his pipe drawing full and free as the sails over his head, the captain felt as the

Aft, against the rail, the mate was leaning.

Jane herself may have felt as she had surged southwards down the east coast, that if danger there was, or treachery planned, then in God's name go forward to meet it.

He even felt uplifted by the thought that, come what might, he was the protector of Andrew, the son of the woman who had pleaded with him one evening ten days ago in the cabin below, and who had shown her trust in him by the very

intensity of her pleading that Andrew might sail with him.

Aft, against the rail, the mate was leaning, close to the little wheel where Dhura was steering. Their conversation had been interrupted by the appearance of the captain on the poop, and save for the sound of the sea slipping by, and the creak of the cordage in the blocks, only the sound of the captain's footsteps broke the stillness of the night.

CHAPTER II

FRANÇOIS THE COOK

THE next morning at eight bells in the first day watch, Andrew, having swept the cabins and laid the table in the cabin, went for'ard to the galley and told François that the captain wished him to go aft as soon as the crew had had breakfast. The Frenchman pretended to have some difficulty in understanding the message, though from the evil glint in his shifty eyes, Andrew shrewdly suspected that the order to report aft was not only understood, but was for some reason resented by the cook.

Putting his head out of the galley, he spoke rapidly in French to Dhura, who was waiting with the mess-can to take the porridge for'ard to the fo'c'sle. The Italian shrugged his shoulders as he glanced at Andrew and back again to the cook.

" We thinka you boy for cabin, eh ? Whaffor capitano wanta François go worka there ? "

" The captain wants me to learn the work on deck," answered Andrew civilly; " I'm no seeking his reason."

The Italian grinned in his usual furtive style.

" Plenty sailors a'ready on sheep; better for you stay in the cabin, I thinka."

He turned to the cook and poured out a torrent of words, which seemed to enrage the Frenchman, who with another evil look at Andrew went aft muttering something about " *Ce sacré mousse.*"

" François no lika capitano," grinned Dhura; " he lika stay for'ard wiz ze sailors. Suppose you tella capitano you no lika sailor work, you stay in cabin. Mooch better for you and François. I teach you sailor worka plenty bymeby, eh ? "

" Mebbe the captain likes to have the cook where he can see him," said Andrew incautiously.

" Eh, what's zat you say ? Ze capitano lika see François ? "

The Italian eyed the boy suspiciously, and Andrew realizing his mistake laughed easily.

" The captain thinks yon François a gey fine

cookie. Wants to see him to have a speir about the victuals maybe."

Dhura threw back his head, showing a broken row of yellow teeth as he laughed.

" Eh, zat's *bueno*. Capitano lika talka François. 'E lika plenty talka François bymeby, I thinka."

And he went forward still chuckling, as though Andrew had made an excellent joke.

The weather continued fair with favouring breezes across the Bay. Andrew spent the mornings happily on deck, learning knots and splices, and the names of the ropes and running gear. He also went aloft with Smith the red-bearded Scot under the eye of Captain Johnson.

He never forgot the thrill with which for the first time he looked down on the deck of the *Jane* from the upper topgallant yard. Seen from aloft, the deck, so solid and broad when he stood upon it, appeared as a narrow plank pushing its precarious way through the limitless sea, azure, changing as it met the bows into a mass of creamy foam, spreading out into two great white feathers which, gently turning over on their sides, sent little curly plumes wriggling out on either beam. Aft the wake of the vessel

writhed like a great sea-serpent, growing thinner and fainter in the distance, to finally fade into the blue depths which stretched away to the far horizon.

On fine days he was allowed to take his trick at the wheel with Patterson or one of the Scots at his side. He learnt to keep her on her compass course, and to steer by the wind, watching the luff of the topsail for the tell-tale shiver that told him he was sailing too close.

Under Mr. Heanan's tuition he learnt to distinguish between a " Granny's knot " and a reef knot, and to tie the various hitches on which the safety of men and even of the ship might well depend. His keen brain and nimble fingers quickly learnt the intricacies of splicing, and he was already looking forward to acquiring the elements of navigation.

The mate was ready to be helpful and friendly, and the boy found it impossible to feel aught but gratitude for the patience with which Heanan taught him the craft of seamanship.

Mr. Heanan was undoubtedly an educated man, and it was difficult to understand why he had not reached a higher position in life than

that of mate in a small brig. Andrew tried hard to like him, but there was something about the smooth and respectful manner which he instinctively distrusted. There was, he felt, a strain of lawlessness and cruelty which for reasons of his own the mate was carefully hiding away from sight. He, moreover, could not help wondering at the familiarity with which the cook and Dhura spoke to him when the captain was not on deck. There seemed to be some common bond between the mate and these two foreigners which stirred up a vague uneasiness in Andrew's mind.

Captain Johnson had made no further reference to the interview between himself and Andrew in the cabin, there being indeed but little opportunity of private conversation on such a small vessel. Whether by chance or design, the mate seemed to be always at hand when the captain exchanged a few words with the cabin-boy.

The *Jane* made a quick passage down the coasts of Spain and Portugal, and in the afternoon of the 13th of May rounded Tarifa Point, close hauled on the starboard tack. With the wind coming N.E., light in strength, she made

an easy reach into the Bay of Gibraltar, and moored alongside the mole, astern of a rakish-looking felucca, just as the sunset gun set the echoes rolling and reverberating over the grey defiant cliffs which rose sheer from the placid sea.

It was then too late for the captain to attend to any of the necessary ship's business ashore, but he told Andrew to be in readiness by nine o'clock next morning to accompany him to Sylva the Jew, part owner with Mr. Camelier of the *Jane*.

Apart from his own town of Leith, the boy had seen only Edinburgh, and the sight of his first foreign town filled him with the keenest interest. The Spanish quarter, unkempt and neglected, with its tattered and poverty-stricken natives, struck him only as picturesque and strange. The faded colour-washed walls with the plaster peeling off, the broken green shutters hanging by a single hinge from windows decked with the family washing, the sure-footed mules which picked their way daintily over the uneven cobbled streets, and the occasional bright red uniforms of the British garrison, their wearers carrying themselves with the haughty air of a

superior race, even the very air, so soft and withal so exhilarating under the glowing sun and the deep blue sky, left in him little regret for the solid, dour respectability of Edinburgh or the well-known gabled houses with their narrow blank-glazed windows of his native town.

The captain, wearing the inevitable tight green coat and knee-breeches, with his beaver hat pressed closely down on his head, strode along the mole, too preoccupied to give any but a perfunctory reply to the eager chatter of the boy by his side. Turning to the left they walked northwards in the direction of the town, consisting at that time for the most part of but a single long street on a narrow plane, throwing off innumerable alleys climbing the bare face of the rock, in which were crowded the nondescript population who preferred an alien rule and grinding poverty to an uprooting from their native rock.

Up one of these uninviting turnings the captain swung, with Andrew close on his heels. The crazy slattern houses almost met on each side of the narrow street, reminding Andrew for a few moments of a visit he had once made

with his gran' to a sick family in the Canongate. But the differences were far greater than the comparisons : decaying vegetables, the sharper and cleaner smell of garlic ; the mongrel dogs in little bands prowling and snarling in search of treasures in the heaps of garbage which littered the uneven roadway. On the dirty doorsteps lolled unkempt, swarthy-looking ruffians shouting unintelligible greetings and badinage back and forth.

" A nest of bloodthirsty pirates," muttered the captain, pausing to allow Andrew to draw level with him. " A pity the Government don't clear them all out over the frontier. I shouldn't like to come up here after dark alone."

Half-way up this unsavoury alley Captain Johnson dived suddenly into a doorway, over which a shabby painted board displayed the name of Manoel de Andrada Sylva. They climbed a narrow stone staircase and paused outside a door on the right of the passage which led to the rear of the house. Beyond this door the passage faded away into darkness, a window at the far end being closely shuttered on the inside.

The captain knocked sharply, and in response to a voice within they entered the office of the mysterious Jew whose letter to Robert Camelier had travelled through Spain and France to the dingy house in Kirk Street.

CHAPTER III

THE SPIDER'S WEB

SEATED at a superb writing-table, which contrasted strangely with the squalid filth of the surroundings, sat the man for whom Mr. Camelier felt a grudging respect not unmixed with suspicious loathing.

A high dome-like forehead, surmounted by a black skullcap, a pair of small black eyes, which reminded Andrew of sloes which had lost their sheen, narrow finely-pencilled eyebrows, and a high-bridged sharply-hooked nose gave one the impression of a vulture or a hawk. But this expression of a bird of prey was offset by the sweetness of his finely-moulded lips, and a chin which spoke of weakness rather than strength.

As he rose to greet his visitors, Andrew realized that his body was small and misshapen, one shoulder being higher than another, while the left arm remained helpless at his side in

" Good-morning, captain."

vivid contrast to the other, which Sylva used so freely to give emphasis to his spoken words.

" Good-morning, captain; you've made a very quick passage, I see." Andrew was startled, without quite knowing why, by the purity of his English. A slight drawling of some of the vowels, a shade too fine an emphasis on his final consonants, alone betrayed his foreign origin.

" Good-morning, señor," said the captain. " Yes, we had fine weather all the way down. May I present to you Andrew Camelier, the son of Mr. Robert Camelier of Leith, your partner in the ownership of the *Jane* ? "

A shadow passed over the composed features of the Jew; his eyes seemed to become smaller and sharper for the fraction of a second. Then as he turned to Andrew his lips parted in a warm friendly smile. He held out his hand with a charming gesture of intimacy as he gravely scanned the features of this unexpected arrival.

" How do you do, Mr. Andrew ? " he said, speaking as to an equal. " No doubt you are making your first voyage, and looking after your father's interests at the same time ? "

Before Andrew could find a reply to this somewhat disconcerting question, the captain broke in—

" That's an awkward question, sir, if I may say so. You see——"

Sylva's eyes again grew small as he looked almost suspiciously at Andrew.

" You see, er—" continued the captain, getting red in the face in his attempt to put the matter in a diplomatic way, " Mr. Robert has

nothing to do with his son being here. As a matter of fact he—er, he just wanted to go to sea and was set on running away, and so——"

"Ah, the incurable romanticism of youth," smiled Sylva, with a tone of relief in his voice. "I quite understand. Mr. Andrew wanted to see the world, and in what better hands could he gratify his ambition than in those of Captain Johnson, and on board the good ship *Jane*?"

Captain Johnson glanced sharply at the Jew.

"I'll see he picks his company at least, señor; and as for the *Jane*, her trade has always been honest, and I hope will remain so."

"To be sure, captain, the arrangement is altogether charming, though Mr. Camelier will no doubt be anxious for the welfare of his son."

Was there a note of sarcasm underlying the smooth words? Before Andrew could make up his mind, Sylva rang a little brass bell on his table.

"A glass of port wine and a cigarro, at least, will not come amiss, captain; and as you have honoured me by bringing Señor Andrew with you, I may take it that he is to be present while we discuss our business arrangements."

A very tall, pale young man with stooping

shoulders and an air of deep depression answered the summons of the bell. Sylva spoke a few words to him, and he went out, returning within a few seconds, it seemed to Andrew, with a tray bearing a bottle, three glasses, and a box of cigars.

Sylva poured out the wine into the three glasses, handing one to the captain and one to Andrew. The boy would have declined, but the Jew quietly insisted that they must pledge the success of the voyage, and the captain seemed to take it for granted that he should not refuse the proffered hospitality.

The men lighted their long black cigars, the glasses were lightly clinked together as they drank success to the *Jane*, and the two men plunged into the business of bills of lading and other details of the shipping trade which Andrew failed to follow.

Though he had only sipped the thick sweet wine, and truth to tell had found it not at all to his taste, the fumes had mounted to his head.

In spite of his valiant efforts to keep awake he found himself nodding. With a start he sat up and fixed his eyes on a large map of Europe which occupied the greater part of the

wall behind the table at which Sylva sat. He followed the course of the *Jane* backwards through the Straits of Gibraltar, a straight course from Tarifa to Cape St. Vincent, and up the Portuguese coast, past the Bay of Biscay, Ushant, and the English Channel—but the map was becoming blurred now, and his eyes were weighted with solid lumps of lead. Far away the voices droned on, "*Twenty pipes of sweet oil, ninety-eight barrels of beeswax.*" What sort of a man was Sylva? Was he a bird of prey, like that golden eagle he had seen in the glass case when he once visited Mr. Macintosh at George IV. Street? Or was he a courteous foreign-looking gentleman whose smile drew your heart to him, and who held the key to mysterious adventures across the sea?

"*The dollars will be transhipped at sea two miles S.E. of Europa Point . . . three swings of a lantern repeated three times. . . .*"

It was the smooth voice of Sylva speaking, and Andrew woke in earnest.

"I don't like this underhand sort of secrecy, señor," came the voice of Captain Johnson.

"But, captain, secrecy is the essence of the whole business. It is entirely necessary that

the rebels get no information. To be quite candid, captain," and here Sylva leant over the table with an engaging air of confidence and lowered his voice, " the royal cause is by no means flourishing. The troops are dissatisfied, for their pay is several months in arrears and the royal coffers at Bahia are empty. Supplies are being sent from another source by another route, but His Majesty's ministers are by no means satisfied that the rebel supporters may not find the means of intercepting and capturing the vessel. A small merchant ship such as the *Jane*, with her lading bills and ship's papers in order, will slip easily through the net if it is spread at sea off Bahia. Believe me, captain, it is just secrecy that must be observed."

" And the risk to the ship and crew if we should be captured, señor ? I for one have no wish to see the inside of a stinking calaboose in rebel hands," said Captain Johnson bluntly.

Andrew leaned forward eagerly. This was indeed adventure. Better than he could ever have dreamed of. Treasure and secrecy, and running the blockade. He waited with wide-awake eyes and ears for the Jew's rejoinder.

" The ship, captain, is surely the affair of the

owners, is it not? As for yourself and the crew"—Sylva paused for a moment as if making up his mind—" the extra risk will be paid for. On behalf of the Portuguese Government I pledge that you shall be paid the sum of a hundred and fifty pounds if successful, the same amount to be paid to your family if you fail."

" If I fail, and if, as seems likely from all accounts to hand, the Royalist cause fails too, there is little chance of the money being paid at all." The captain in turn leaned forward and his tone became incisive. " See here, señor, I do not know, nor does it concern me where this money comes from, but I might venture a guess that it does not come from the revenues of the Regency. Give me a note of hand for the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, signed by yourself, and I'll run the cargo. Otherwise, though I lose my post for it, I wash my hands of the affair here and now."

Andrew glanced at the Jew, who sat for a moment gazing straight before him on to the papers on his table.

" Very good, captain," he smiled courteously, " I will have a little document drawn up, signed by yourself and by me, and duly witnessed, that

the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds is to be paid to you or to your assignees whether you hand over the dollars to His Majesty's Government at Bahia, or whether you are captured by the rebels before reaching Brazil."

Reaching out a long finely-moulded hand he rang the bell.

" You understand, señor," said Captain Johnson, half in apology, " that I must consider my own interests and those of my family."

Sylva held up a protesting hand.

" My dear captain, you are extremely wise. After all, the affair is a business proceeding, and as an interested party you have an obvious right to take every measure of self-protection."

He turned to the pale young clerk, who in obedience to the summons was standing beside his master's chair, and addressed him in Spanish ; then turning again to his guests—

" And now, gentlemen, while Juan prepares the deed, another glass of wine to drink success to our enterprise and to the Cause, and confusion to the upstart Don Pedro."

Andrew politely and very wisely declined more of the rich heady wine, but Captain Johnson drank two more glasses and accepted

" These are lawless days, are they not, Juan ? "

another long black cigar, which was only half-consumed when he and his young companion made their way down the crazy staircase into the dusty street, which by this time glowed with the fierce rays of the sun like an oven.

As they emerged from the narrow opening on to the main street the captain chuckled.

" That's the way to do business with those Jews, boy," he said. " I reckon we came out of that business very handsomely."

Andrew made no reply. Truth to tell he did not share the captain's optimism. Sylva had given way far too easily, and young as he was, the cabin-boy had read more of the character of Don Sylva from the last half-hour than his captain would have done in a lifetime.

Had they been able to be present unseen in the office they had just left, the Englishman's estimate of his own business acumen would have been rudely shaken.

The pale young man was in the act of removing the tray with the glasses and the now empty wine bottle. Sylva was smiling in the same frank courteous way he had done to the captain.

"Englishmen," he was saying, "are the victims of their own singleness of purpose. Notice, Juan, the wording of our bond. We have provided for success or for capture by the rebels, but our most obtuse friend the English captain failed to envisage a third contingency. These are lawless days, are they not, Juan? and there are other sources of danger for the *Jane* than the ships of Don Pedro."

Juan, who had no delusions about his master, or indeed about mankind in general, moved

towards the door leading into his own grimy room.

"The Señor Don Sylva," he murmured respectfully, "will doubtless have provided for *all* contingencies."

CHAPTER IV

A NIGHT ADVENTURE

THE next day lighters came alongside the *Jane*, and the work of shifting the sand-ballast commenced. A gang of swarthy natives swarmed on board carrying great baskets and shovels, which they threw down into the hold with much chattering and gesticulation. Having smoked a few cigarettes, and after what seemed to be a serious quarrel as to who should take the first spell of work, they leisurely followed their baskets and shovels and made a half-hearted attack on their work.

By dint of much strong language on the captain's part and an urgent message to the contractors to hurry on the unloading, the hold was clear three days later, and the first consignment of beeswax and olive oil was brought down to the mole on long carts drawn by mules.

This part of the work was shared by the crew

and proceeded apace, though Captain Johnson's patience was still sorely taxed by the interminable delays which prevented a full day's work being done by his men. Urgent messages to Sylva to hurry on the shipments seemed to produce little effect, and it was not until the afternoon of the twenty-ninth that the last consignment, consisting of some scores of boxes of raisins, was stored in the hold and the little vessel was ready to receive her final and most valuable item of cargo. If the crew wondered why the hatches were not fastened down as soon as the last box of raisins was stowed they made no remark, though Andrew thought he caught a significant look pass between the mate and the cook when Mr. Heanan gave the word to suspend work round the hatches and clear the decks.

Occupied with the business of the ship and the constant efforts to hurry on the work of loading, Captain Johnson had found no time to write his letter to his solicitor enclosing the bond between himself and Sylva. To tell the truth he hated writing letters, and never did so unless driven by necessity, and even then only at the last possible moment.

That evening as soon as Andrew had lit the lamps, the captain fetched his writing materials into the saloon, and sitting down at the table, he squared his shoulders and laboriously penned in a bold round script a letter to Mr. David Surtees, his solicitor in Plymouth, with whom he had had some small legal business on former occasions.

The letter informed Mr. Surtees that Captain Johnson of the brig *Jane* was about to undertake an enterprise of some uncertainty and possible danger. In the event of the danger materializing and the vessel and crew falling into the hands of certain parties mentioned in the enclosed bond, a claim should be made upon Señor Manoel de Andrada Sylva for the sum therein set down. Of the total amount, one hundred and fifty pounds was to be paid over to Mrs. Mary Johnson of 23 Little Street, Plymouth, and one hundred pounds divided between the legal representatives of the undermentioned men comprising the crew of the *Jane*.

The letter finished, with much wrinkling of the brow and profound thought, the captain called for Andrew, who was busy in the pantry.

" Take this to the harbourmaster, Andrew,"

he said, as he carefully sanded the letter and sealed the packet. "He is a personal friend of mine, and will see that the letter leaves Gibraltar by the next warship homeward bound. You will find him at home in his house in Main Street, just beyond the turning we took this morning and on the same side. Ask your way if necessary, and, above all, place the packet in Mr. Martin's own hands."

Andrew tucked the letter under his jerkin, where it would be held in place by his belt, proud of being sent ashore on such a mission.

"And whatever you do, boy," added the captain, "keep to Main Street and speak only to Britishers."

As Andrew stepped on to the deck from the cabin hatchway and turned to make his way to the gang-plank he heard footsteps coming along the deck from for'ard. The steps paused for a moment as though their owner were listening, then crossed the sounding wood of the plank which led from the *Jane* to the mole. By the light of an oil lamp which hung from an iron pole abreast of the brig, Andrew saw a small shuffling figure make its way rapidly shorewards.

"Now what's yon cook away after all alone?"

thought the boy, remembering that the mate had given strict orders that none of the crew were to go ashore as the ship would be under way by ten o'clock, and he feared that the lure of the wine-shops might prevent the men from returning on board before the small hours of the morning. "Forby he's gone to fetch drink for the others, though 'tis more like he'd ha' sent yon Italian." He gave a little gasp of excitement as it flashed across his mind that the Frenchman might have some secret business ashore which boded no good to the captain and the lawful trade of the *Jane*.

Treading softly, he ran lightly over the gangplank and followed the trail of François down the deserted mole.

A half-moon was riding high in the sky, obscured from time to time by feathery clouds which scudded across the sky before a brisk breeze from the Atlantic. Keeping as much in the shadow as possible, Andrew hurried down the mole, but not until he reached the shore end did he catch sight of his quarry twenty paces ahead, walking quickly as though of set purpose, his long arms swinging loosely at his sides.

Along the broad street facing the harbour they went, the boy feeling a growing excitement as he saw that the cook passed several wine-shops, whence came the sounds of noisy revelry, without showing any intention of entering.

Only a few passers-by were afoot : a group of English soldiers arm-in-arm, evidently out for an evening's enjoyment along the water front ; a few skulking figures loitering in dark doorways ; and a stray pariah dog rooting in the gutter for garbage. It was darker now, for the moon was obscured by a mass of opaque clouds, and the few oil lamps hanging in brackets from the walls of the houses gave but little light.

Suddenly Andrew's heart gave a jump. The cook had disappeared as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed him up. The boy ran forward and found himself at the entrance to the same narrow street up which he had gone with the captain a week previously. Listening intently he heard the shambling footsteps of the cook as he climbed the steep alley roughly paved with uneven cobbles. So François was going to visit Sylva ! Instinctively Andrew clenched his fists and braced himself to the ordeal of entering the unsavoury street.

He recalled the captain's words as they had turned in from the main street : " I shouldn't like to come up here after dark alone."

He must go through with it now, he said to himself, as he followed the cook, keeping close to the wall and treading on tiptoe, lest the sound of his footsteps should be overheard in this narrow alley with the houses pressing in on either side.

The sound of stumbling and muttered curses ahead of him suddenly ceased, and Andrew knew that François had come to the house where Sylva lived.

" Yon loon seems to ken fine how to find the hoose in the dark," he thought to himself as he crept after him. The moon emerging at that moment from the bank of clouds, threw a sickly gleam of light into the narrow street. With a thrill of excitement Andrew found that he stood opposite the doorway through which the cook must have entered. Step by step the boy stole up the steps until he stood in the evil-smelling hallway. Here the darkness was impenetrable, and he tried to remember on which side the stairs ran up to the floor above. As his hand groped for the rail he heard the steps of his man

above him, then the sound of a door opening. A flickering light cast fantastic shadows over the grimy walls, and Andrew crouched down again as he heard the voice of the pale young clerk asking who was there. The snarling voice of the cook answered him, and guided by the light of the candle which Juan held over the banisters the Frenchman reached the landing above. The light vanished and there came the faint sound of a closing door, followed by a weird and uncanny silence that made the boy's flesh creep. Bracing himself to see the affair through, he made his way silently up the staircase, keeping tight hold of the rail to prevent himself from making a false step which might arouse the inmates.

Reaching the landing, he saw a gleam of light under what he thought must be the same door through which he had entered Sylva's office with the captain the day after they had arrived at Gibraltar.

Tiptoeing along the wall he placed his ear against the door.

From within came the sound of voices too low to allow the listener to catch the words.

Wondering what his next move should be,

Andrew caught the sound of the Frenchman's voice evidently raised in protest.

Holding his breath, afraid lest the loud beating of his own heart might drown the words, the boy strained his ears to catch the words.

"Zere ees an Eenglish say, señor, zat dead man tell not ze tales. So, too, sunk sheeps carry not ze news."

"You, monsieur," replied the clear, cultured voice of Sylva, "are clearly a man of blood; I, on the contrary, prefer to keep my hands clean—unless it is absolutely necessary to soil them."

"*Nécessaire! Sacré nom!* You no tink eet *nécessaire*? Always zere will be risk of pursuit by Eenglish man-o'-war. Zat capitain will give ze information here, at ze Canaries, everywhere. I tell you, señor, I no like Eenglish sailors."

"I don't pretend to love them myself, monsieur, though I find it amusing to deceive them. I have hoodwinked the good Captain Johnson over this affair already, and I shall do so again. The felucca manned by my own men will lie in wait for you off the Canaries in the latitude

He placed his ear against the door.

and longitude which Mr. Heanan knows. It is his business to see that the brig reaches the right spot. The dollars will be taken off after a protest, and, if possible, a pretence of resistance by all of you on the *Jane*. Captain Johnson will have no other alternative than to return to Gibraltar to report his loss to me. The dollars will be safely disposed of by the time he reaches here, and I shall offer him my sincere

sympathy, and show the greatest distress at such a gross act of piracy. I shall "—and Sylva's voice rose as he warmed up to the congenial task of weaving his web of intrigue—" I shall certainly report the matter to the English authorities, and no doubt they will spend much time and money in search of the lost dollars, which meanwhile will be safely lodged in the little cove over on the Spanish side, whence we shall in due course share them out in the agreed way."

There was a long pause, the Frenchman evidently considering what must have seemed to him an unnecessarily complicated plan to achieve a very simple end.

" Bah ! All ze fuss and bother, señor, all ze details which may go wrong. Dead men zey no tell ze tales, and sunk sheeps——"

" Monsieur, you fatigue me," cut in the silky voice of the Jew, with an incisive note of authority underlying the almost careless words. " I have told you what I require you to do, and it merely remains for you to do it. If you don't like the plan say so, and I will send some one in your place, though "—and the voice became more caressing than ever—" I fear that I

should feel it *quite necessary* to take means to keep your mouth closed——"

Another pause. But François knew when he was mastered, and changed his tone to one of servile flattery at once.

" By all means, señor; I was only making ze idea to you. I will tell Heanan zat all is now in order, and will hand over ze money you 'ave give me to ze men. Ze *Jane* sails in one hour. I say you good-night, señor."

There came the sound of chairs being pushed back as the men rose to their feet.

Andrew slipped silently into the darkness of the passage beyond the door until he reached the window at the far end of the passage.

The door of Sylva's office was opened, letting out a broad band of light on to the dusty stone floor of the passage. François came out, followed by Juan, who was carrying a tall candlestick in which a guttering candle was burning. The clerk leant over the banisters lighting the cook on his way down the stairs.

Breathlessly the boy listened to the sound of the receding footsteps until at last they died away as the cook reached the door leading into the street.

Juan turned away from the banisters to re-enter the room, facing the end of the passage as he did so. Stretching out his arms, evidently badly in need of his night's rest, he opened his mouth in a prodigious yawn. With his mouth opened to its widest extent, the astonished clerk suddenly caught sight of the crouching figure of Andrew pressed closely against the shuttered window.

With a gasp which almost choked him he let the candle fall from his nerveless fingers, standing outlined in the light from the office, a fantastic figure of gaping wonderment.

Andrew realized in a flash that he must act quickly if he wished to escape from his corner and regain freedom. Drawing himself up, every nerve and muscle braced for action, with a curious elation in his heart at the prospect of battle, he hurled himself like a stone from a catapult down the passage. Fists clenched and head low he aimed himself straight at the belt-line of the Spaniard.

By the time the astonished Juan guessed what was coming, it was too late for him to avoid the impact. Andrew's head, with all the taut weight of his young body behind it, caught the

clerk in the pit of the stomach like a battering-ram, carrying him out of the shaft of light to the very head of the stairs.

Andrew saved himself from falling by a lucky clutch at the banisters, swung himself on to the top stair, and like a flash, guided by the iron rail, fled down to the street. Above him came a confused sound of footsteps, and the voice of Sylva calling Juan by name.

Stumbling and slipping over the uneven stones he emerged from the dark alley into Main Street, recalling as he did so his errand to the harbourmaster. Mr. Martin himself opened the door, and promised to send off the captain's letter at the first opportunity.

He walked quickly back to the brig, whose decks were still deserted and silent, without seeing anything of the cook, and went below, where he found the captain sitting at the cabin table poring over a chart of the Atlantic Ocean with a ruler and a pair of compasses.

He listened to Andrew's story, filling and lighting his long clay pipe without question or interruption, his eyes fixed on the hanging lamp above, his right hand describing vague circles with the compasses on the table before him.

CHAPTER V

SILVER GALLONS

As Andrew concluded his story, the captain laid his pipe down on the table and gazed thoughtfully at the blackened clay bowl as if seeking guidance.

"You did well, boy," he said at last, "and I'm glad you remembered the letter. If things do go wrong, there'll be some compensation anyway.

"All the same," and he looked straight at Andrew with a determined glint in his blue eyes, "it's not nearly so bad as it might be. We're on our guard now, and at least we know that the dollars are a lawful cargo sent to the Portuguese Government at Bahia."

He rose briskly to his feet as though the interview were at an end.

"It's our job to get the money there safely, Andrew, and we're going to do it. As for the

attempt off the Canaries, it will be easy to steer clear of them and of Sylva's felucca."

"But the Frenchman and Mr. Heanan," broke in Andrew eagerly, "surely, sir, you won't trust them now?"

"We've already gone over the crew," answered the captain, "and we know just where we are. With Smith, Strachan, and Patterson we shall be more than a match for them. I know the breed, boy, and when they know Sylva's scheme has failed they'll——"

At that moment there came a discreet knock at the door of the cabin, and to the captain's "come in" appeared the respectful figure of Mr. Heanan. He started as he found that Andrew was with the master, and the boy caught a fleeting glance of suspicion as the mate said with his usual quiet deference, "Everything is ready, sir; we can sail when you like. The wind is light from the nor'west."

"Right, Mr. Heanan; I'll be on deck at once. Send the hands aloft to loosen sail, and stand by to cast off."

As the door closed behind the mate, the captain laid his hand on Andrew's shoulder.

"Now, boy, not a word on what you've told

me. I'm pleased with you, Andrew. You've shown pluck, and I'm glad you butted that pasty-faced clerk in the guts. Now it's a close mouth and the weather eye for both of us. On deck with you, lad, and lend a hand in getting away."

Under spanker foresail and jib, the *Jane* edged away from the mole. As she gathered steering-way, topsails, courses, and topgallant sails were spread, and with the wind coming fair on the quarter the little brig, heeling gently as the breeze came stronger away from the shelter of the Rock, rapidly gained the open sea.

The sky was clear overhead, with the moon low in the west, and the stars a glory of twinkling golden points. Lying out on the upper topgallant yardarm, Andrew felt a glow of excitement at the prospect of the real adventure ahead. At last he stood as it were alone with his hero. Only the captain and himself were in the secret of the intended treachery of Heanan and the two foreigners Gautiez and Dhura ; he pictured the triumphant return of the *Jane* to Leith with the would-be mutineers chained in the hold, and he, once the ship's boy, acting as mate as the little vessel once more rounded the

wooden jetty, where, of course, his mother and father would be waiting to welcome him back to his home.

Standing well out across the Straits towards the African coast, a sharp look-out was kept for the fishing-boat which was to bring the dollars out from a point between Gibraltar and Algeciras.

A light was shown from the stern three times in quick succession at intervals of two minutes. At last an answering signal was seen on the starboard quarter, and the *Jane* hove-to to allow the fishing-boat to come alongside.

The deck of the little vessel again sprang into activity. Lanterns were lashed to the rigging, a tackle rigged to the yardarm, and the crew turned to hoisting the silver cargo from the lateen-sailed fishing-boat, and stowing it in the hold of the brig.

Andrew was a little disappointed to find that the dollars were packed in eight large wooden casks—old wooden wine casks, holding from seven to eighteen gallons each.

"One hundred and twenty-four gallons of silver Spanish dollars," as the captain afterwards

told Andrew, " the rarest vintage that ever casks held, though I'd as lief they were filled with honest red wine."

The crew worked with a will, the swarthy fishermen looking on with incurious eyes, not offering to lend a hand in the transhipment, and in half an hour the last cask containing eighteen solid silver gallons disappeared into the hold. The hatch was covered and the tarpaulin fastened down with wedges driven in by the mate himself, the yards were squared, and, with the brisk breeze holding fair, the brig headed for the open Atlantic and the far Brazils.

The knowledge that evil was afoot made Andrew wide-awake, and he leant for long over the bulwarks in the waist of the ship watching the phosphorescent curling wave from the sharp bows passing away astern and to leeward into the impenetrable darkness of the mysterious night.

The light of Tarifa was far astern, and faint on the larboard quarter flashed the faint reflection of some lighthouse guarding the African coast. Away from the land the air had grown chilly. Thin wreaths of white mist obscured

The crew worked with a will.

the stars ; the moon had long since sunk beneath the horizon ahead.

With a slight shiver he turned to go below, feeling at last the call of the warm blankets in the bunk made up behind the partition in the captain's cabin.

Quickly throwing off his clothes he said his prayers and clambered into his bunk. On the other side of the partition he could hear the captain still moving about, and the pungent

smell of raw tobacco made its way through the cracks of the boards which divided him from his captain.

He fell asleep at last, his ears filled again with the song of the wind through the shrouds above his head and the slap-slap of the sea close to his head.

Troubled dreams came to him that night, dreams of stormy seas and the white deck of the *Jane* red with blood. The dream which had come to him on the night after he had first met his hero came back more clear and vivid than before: the little brig staggering through dark grey combers which reared their hissing crests aloft to the sullen sky, at the wheel the sinister figure of great breadth of shoulder, with a livid scar down the left cheek. With a cry of terror on his lips Andrew awoke with a fast-beating heart, for the figure was no longer that of an unknown man, but that of Mr. Heanan, the smooth-spoken mate of the *Jane*.

CHAPTER VI

ON THE TOPGALLANT YARDARM

CLOSE-HAULED on the starboard tack, the *Jane*, her lee rail awash, every brace and stay singing the song of the brave sou'wester, was threshing her way across the Atlantic.

With the wind coming almost dead from the sou'west and still freshening, her course would take her well to the nor'ard of the Canaries, and out of reach of the long arm of Sylva. Captain Johnson was in high spirits, for sailing as close to the wind as possible neither the mate nor Gautiez could suspect that the plan to waylay the brig was known to the skipper, and that anything but the perversity of the elements was responsible for the imminent failure of the proposed piracy.

That the conspirators would take their defeat lying down seemed as improbable to Andrew as it was taken for granted by his captain, but

the boy could do nothing against the invincible optimism of his hero, except keep as close an eye as possible upon Mr. Heanan and Gautiez.

They were ten days out from Gibraltar, and until the day before, had passed a whole week drifting idly with flapping sails, making but little progress.

By eight bells in the afternoon the wind had increased in force and the sea become so heavy that the captain gave orders to take in the topgallant sails and reef the topsails and spanker.

With the others Andrew sprang to the weather shrouds and fought his way to the topgallant yard. Edging out to the lee yardarm he helped to gather in the billowing folds of dingy canvas which struggled as though possessed with life against the puny attempts of man to subdue them. So busy was he with the back-aching work that not until the last fold had been flattened out and secured, and the sail lay snug against the yard, did he notice that the cook had been working beside him, and that instead of making his way inboard the Frenchman was leaning over the yard leering at him from his cunning eyes, his lips parted in a snarl like that of a mongrel dog.

Andrew felt a tightening around his heart and a deadly coldness creep over his limbs. There was no mistaking the evil look in those crafty eyes, and the memory of the words spoken by the cook in Sylva's office had shown the man to be without trace of pity or decent human feeling. He glanced aft to the poop. The captain had gone below, having seen his orders taken in hand, Mr. Heanan was in charge of the ship, Dhura at the wheel, Smith and Strachan on the weather yardarm tying the last gaskets, while Patterson, the big silent Englishman, was still at work on the business of reefing the spanker with his back turned to what was going on on the fore-topsail yard.

" Hullo, cookie, what about getting down out o' this ? ye'll be wanting to get back to the galley the now."

Gautiez gave a quick glance round, to make sure that they were out of sight of the men on the other side of the mast, and that Patterson was still too occupied to pay attention to anything but the job in hand. His left hand stole to his waist, where his sheath-knife hung in its leather sheath, while his right had crept along the rail in Andrew's direction.

So it was murder, cold-blooded murder! The cook knew of Andrew's presence in Sylva's house, and the gang were to take the first step towards stealing the dollars by getting rid of the boy who had dared to interfere with their plans.

In a flash Andrew realized that it was a matter of seconds before his body, either already dead or carrying with it a deep wound from the keen-edged knife, would be hurtling down into the huge waves, to be whirled away to leeward.

As in the dark passage of the Jew's house at Gibraltar, his brain and body seemed to become one, and a plan formed in his mind like a sudden flash.

"Look behind you, cookie, look behind you! What's yon bogy thing against the mast?"

The tone of terror, which came so naturally at the moment, checked the cook in the act of drawing his knife. Taking a grip with his left hand he turned round in the direction indicated. In a flash, Andrew, muscles taut and mind and eye acting in perfect unison, was at the cook's side. Another second, and, as the man turned his head back and was again reaching for his knife, the boy's hand closed over the hilt, and drew the steel clear of the leather sheath.

" Down with ye, or ye'll no go doon by the ratlines at all."

Before the cook could gather his wits Andrew was back in his old position. Gripping the rail of the yard with his right hand, he held the knife pointed straight at Gautiez, who, with wide-open eyes, and with his lower jaw fallen, stared at the boy.

" We maun be gettin' down out of this, cookie, I'm thinking. Will you just move quick if ye'd no have a wee bittie knife in your ribs. Down with ye, or ye'll no go doon by the ratlines at all."

Without another word Gautiez edged his way along the yard, swung into the ratlines, and made his way to the deck followed by Andrew, who, truth to tell, was feeling, now that the danger was over, as though his very limbs were turned to putty, while a cold sweat broke out over his forehead.

On reaching the deck, and joining the group aft under the break of the poop, to await further orders, Andrew found his red-bearded friend Peter Smith gazing curiously at the knife which the boy still held in his hand.

For a moment Andrew was tempted to blurt out the whole affair. The cook's treachery exposed and the man himself secured, the danger of a mutiny would be so much the less. Second thoughts, however, showed how flimsy his story would sound down here with the solid deck under their feet, and he knew Captain Johnson well enough by this time to be quite certain that he would pooh-pooh the story of attempted murder, and refuse to have Gautiez put into irons.

He made up his mind to carry off the affair with a high hand, and though his intuition told him he was only at the beginning of a series of acts of treachery and violence, ending in God

alone knew what black cold-blooded murder, his pride drove him on.

" Och, I'd nigh forgotten your knife, cookie," he said, holding it out to François by the blade. " Thank you for the loan of it. It was gey useful up yonder."

With a sickly grin Gautiez took the knife and slid it into the sheath.

" But why couldn't you use your own, Andrew ? " said a soft voice from over his head. Looking up to the rail of the poop, the boy saw the broad shoulders of Mr. Heanan. Under the smooth words and the gentle tone Andrew felt something even more sinister than the open violence of the Frenchman, and once more his heart felt a queer constriction.

" Cookie's was half out of the sheath, sir, so I just helped him out with it, as I wanted it sair badly at the moment."

" He's a bit too sudden with that knife of his, Andrew ; there's more ways of getting things done than by slashing at them."

Before he could find any reply to these enigmatical words, the mate had disappeared, leaving both Andrew and Gautiez in some doubt as to his meaning.

CHAPTER VII

GATHERING CLOUDS

By midnight the wind had slackened sufficiently for the reefs to be shaken out of topsails and spankers, and the topgallant sails set. The long grey combers no longer swooped down on the little vessel as though intent on her destruction, though there was still enough swell to make the brig roll until her main yardarm almost touched the water.

Leaving the mate in charge, together with Patterson and Gautiez who formed his watch, for by Mr. Heanan's own request Andrew did not keep the night watches, the captain went below. Andrew had gone to the galley to prepare hot coffee for the skipper, and having put it down on the table in the saloon was about to leave the cabin, when there was a knock at the door and Strachan apologetically edged his way into the forbidden precincts.

" Begging your pardon, sir, but micht I hae a word wi' ye ? "

Captain Johnson looked up in some surprise. " By all means, Strachan ; what is it you want ? "

The man twisted his hat round in his hands, his rather weak face taking on a still more apologetic air.

" Weel, sir, it's like this," he paused again, looking down at his feet as though expecting to find the necessary words on the holystoned deck of the cabin. " There's talk for'ard by yon Frenchie and Dhura aboot mutiny and making awa' wi' the dollars—he's a gey crooked loon yon cook, and wad no stick at murder if it cam' his way."

Captain Johnson thoughtfully stirred his smoking coffee.

" You think then that one Frenchie and one Italian would be a match for the rest of us, Strachan ? "

" I'm no saying that, sir ; I thocht as though it were ma duty to gie ye a word," and Strachan wriggled under the steady half-mocking gaze of his captain, and started to back out of the cabin.

" Quite right, Strachan," said the captain

kindly; "you've done your duty, and you'll best go on doing it by keeping your mouth shut and your eyes open, and don't let anybody know you've been aft to see me."

"You can get off to your bunk, Andrew," he said, as the door closed behind the Scotsman. "No, no, my boy, don't you start worrying yourself and me about these fine mutineers. When they've realized we've given the felucca the slip, they'll not have the spunk to try anything on single-handed. Get you to bed, boy. The glass still holds low and there's more wind coming; there'll be work enough for you tomorrow if I know anything about the weather in these latitudes."

Andrew, realizing the uselessness of further argument, left the captain to his coffee, and in a few minutes was snugly curled up fast asleep in his bunk, in which he had firmly wedged a weather-board to make sure he wasn't rolled out on to the deck.

Work for all hands came sooner than was expected. Just before the captain turned out to relieve the mate at four o'clock, a black squall swept down from the nor'east, laying the *Jane*

aback and heeling her over until her lee rail disappeared in a frothing mass of grey-green sea. With a report like the discharge of a cannon the fore-topsail was torn into ribbons, great streamers of canvas thrashing the air like gigantic whiplashes. Released of the pressure of the sail, the *Jane* eased up sufficiently for the topgallant-sail yards to be lowered and the courses hauled round to brace her up on the other tack. The mate's whistle had called all hands on deck, and by the time Andrew had scrambled into his clothes and reached the poop the men were up aloft, led by Mr. Heanan, furling the lower and cutting away the ribbons of the upper topsail.

The squall had been the forerunner of a fierce gale which, coming from a new direction, raised a nasty cross-sea, lumpy dollops of which fell aboard every two or three minutes.

"Go to the wheel, Andrew, and give Strachan a hand," the captain shouted in Andrew's ear, and the boy made his way to where the sailor was hanging desperately on to the spokes.

"She's kicking like an old cuddie," grinned Strachan cheerfully as Andrew grasped the spokes, which were jerking to every heavy on-

slaught of the waves as though a giant hand was administering heavy blows to the rudder beneath the counter. " Ower muckle canvas for'ard, I'm thinking."

Captain Johnson was evidently of the same mind, for a few minutes later he sent Andrew up aloft, it being impossible to make his voice heard through the din of the storm, with orders to Mr. Heanan to send a hand down to stow the jib.

" Come down with him, boy," added the captain, " and go for'ard and give him a hand. You've got to do a sailor's work to-night."

Flattened out by the force of the wind, Andrew made his way up the weather shrouds and delivered his message. By the time he reached the topgallant yard, the sail had been stowed, though the torn streamers of the topsail still threshed about dangerously.

" Get you down there, Smith," shouted the mate, " and get the jib stowed, and look alive ; there's more wind coming before we're through with this lot."

On the fo'c'sle head Andrew let go the halyards, and gave Smith a hand with the downhaul. Eager to show that he was now a fully-

fledged sailor, he made his way out along the jib-boom and helped to gather the reluctant sail. Together they lashed the canvas securely, and soaked to the skin, almost blinded by the spray, with the breath knocked out of them by the buffeting they had had, they scrambled back on board and paused for a moment to wring their clothes out as best they might and take a breather.

" Good work, laddie, ye'll mak' a sailorman yet," said Smith as they began to fight their way down the streaming decks.

Abreast of the foremast, came a yell from aloft. Something small and heavy whizzed through the air, and Smith with a grunt of pain rolled into the lee scuppers. At the same time a short green sea reared itself over the bulwarks and fell aboard.

His attention distracted by the sudden and mysterious incident, Andrew was not holding fast, and in a moment he too was swept down to leeward.

A great roaring of water sounded in his ears as he grasped desperately for something solid to cling to. His fingers seized a rope, which was almost at once torn from his grasp. He had

a dim feeling that hands were holding him. A voice very far off seemed to be shouting close to his ear. Something heavy hit him over the back of the head, and he remembered no more.

Familiar sounds floated back into his consciousness : the high-pitched shriek of the wind through the rigging, the rising and falling crescendo of the sea, and the creaking of the timbers as the *Jane* shuddered at the impact of the waves.

He found difficulty in opening his eyes, while a dull pain at the back of his head made him glad to lie still for awhile and gather his scattered senses. Gradually he pieced together the happenings which had led up to his lying here in his own narrow bunk—stowing the jib out on the jib-boom, Peter Smith's words of encouragement as they came aft, the warning shout from aloft, the cry of pain from Smith followed by fall to leeward, and the treacherous sea rearing its ugly crest over the rail as it leapt aboard.

The agony of being suffocated, pressed flat against the bulwarks, and the terror of being

unable to grasp any solid thing rushed back to him. He sat up in his bunk and gazed wildly around him. How did he come here, and what had happened to Smith ?

He had already swung one leg over the weather-board of his bunk when the door was flung open and the burly figure of Captain Johnson appeared at the opening.

" Well, lad, and how're we feeling now ? " said the skipper heartily. " You'd better stay where you are for awhile ; the wind's dropping fast and sea going down. Stiff blow while it lasted. Never lasts long in these latitudes this season of the year. I've told François to bring you a cup of coffee and a bite——"

" What happened, sir, out yonder on deck ? I'm fair dazed still and canna remember much ; I got a muckle clout on the head. Is Smith badly hurt ? "

" Some lubber on the yardarm let go a marline-spike," answered the captain. " Must have missed his head by a hair's-breadth, and got him right through the foot. He pulled you out of the scuppers, Andrew, but he'll have to lay off for a bit."

Captain Johnson stepped to the door, opened

it, and cast a look round the cabin, then closing it came back and stood by the bunk, looking down at Andrew. The merry twinkle which generally lit up his bronzed face was now absent, and his blue eyes were clouded with doubt.

" Can you make a guess at who dropped the marline-spike ? " he asked.

" It would be Dhura, I'm thinking, sir," replied Andrew ; " a fine chance that for him with the twa of us struggling about right under his feet. What'll you be going to do about it, sir ? "

" There's nothing I can do, boy, for the present. There's naught to go on for certain. Marline-spikes have been dropped from aloft by accident before to-day. Who's going to prove the dago did it purposely ? "

" But we ken fine that François had a speir with the Jew, sir, and there's something I ought to have told you——"

A knock at the door interrupted Andrew, and the cook entered bearing a great steaming mug of coffee and a slice of bread.

" We'll have another talk later on, Andrew, when you've had a sleep," said the captain when the cook had gone. " But we'll be careful, for we don't want to let them know that we suspect

" Well, lad, and how're we feeling now ? "

anything. We're short-handed enough as it is, and I doubt if there's enough evidence for me to put them in irons."

And with that Andrew had to be content, though something deep down in his heart told him that the crisis was very close at hand.

PART III

CHAPTER I

MUTINY AND MURDER

THE black-purple arch of the tropic sky, pierced by myriads of soft deep-golden stars. A long silent swell without a ripple to break the reflection of the starlit vault above. In the centre of the vast ring of horizon alone was the magic silence broken. The flapping of idle sails, the faint creak of blocks, and the half-somnolent gurgle as the *Jane* dreamily lifted to the reluctant swell which gently raised her shapely hull and as tenderly eased it down again, to be once more lifted by its follower. Here, in the heart of the great Atlantic in her most benignant mood, the little brig fitted into the picture of peaceful rest, sleeping quietly as a child that slumbers on its mother's breast awaiting the coming of the golden dawn.

Already far off on the eastern rim the purple was lighting to mauve. As the light from the

yet invisible sun reached each bright constellation, the stars paled and faded, giving place in gracious humility to their mighty master about to take up his daily task.

Sky and water blended into greys and greens ; at one point alone a tinge of burnished copper.

Great shafts of lurid red and gold, spokes of the fiery chariot wheel, announced the coming of another day. In the west alone the stars, now pale silver, blinked their last good-night.

In his narrow bunk Andrew dreamed happily of Leith, the Pentland Hills, and the merry white horses over the Forth. Once more he felt his mother's arms around him, and strangely enough his father was there too, his stern features lit up by a tender smile which Andrew had never seen before, but which filled him with a quiet contentment as though this alone was needful to make his cup of happiness full to the very brim.

There was not yet light enough to see more than the darker outline of a skulking figure creeping from the poop down the cabin companion. At the wheel James Patterson, the big solid Englishman, let the spokes of the useless wheel slip idly through his hands, while

between him and the companionway the figure of the mate was interposed.

Step by step the undersized figure of the evil François felt its way down the stairs and into the cabin. By the pale light of the dawning day his shifty eyes made out the shape of the captain's bunk.

Stealthily he raised the musket to his shoulders, and taking what aim he could in the dim light he drew the trigger.

Through the flimsy bulkhead the report reached the sleeping Andrew. Half-dazed with sleep he sat up rubbing his eyes. Daylight was filtering through the tiny port-hole over his bunk. Straining his ears he caught no sound but the flapping of the sails and the slight creaking of timbers as the *Jane* rolled lazily to the swell.

Then came the quick tread of footsteps overhead and a cry of alarm from the poop. Hastily throwing on a jersey and breeches, he tore open the door and rushed to the stairway. As he reached the foot, a dark shadow passed from the companionway on to the deck above him. The night in Gibraltar came back to him when that same figure had flitted ahead of him through the dark streets of the silent town.

As he reached the deck, every sense alert, some inner voice warned him that this was a bigger danger than he had hitherto met—a danger threatening not only himself, but his beloved captain and the little *Jane*.

The picture that met his eyes on that perfect tropic dawn was one he was never to forget. Outlined against the glow of the eastern sky the heavy shoulders of the mate were silhouetted as though cut out in dark relief, his arms above his head brandishing a musket which he held by the barrel. As his arms fell he stepped sideways, and at the same moment the bulky body of Patterson rushed in beneath the threatening butt of the musket.

The seaman's head was streaming with blood from the blows he had already received ; that he was weakened by the loss of blood was plain by the ease with which the mate thrust him off and prepared to deal another murderous stroke.

In a flash Andrew had hurled himself across the deck. If he could get his arms round the mate's neck, the very unexpectedness of the attack might divert his attention and give Patterson time to take the offensive.

Before he could clear the intervening space,

he heard a quick step behind him ; the butt-end of a musket deftly inserted between his feet sent him flying down to the bulwarks as the *Jane* heeled quietly to the sea.

As he gathered himself together, he saw the mate strike home on Patterson's head ; with a groan the seaman collapsed upon the deck, where he lay sprawled beside the wheel, which turned to and fro as the seas swung the rudder beneath the counter.

Pulling himself painfully to his feet Andrew turned to see who had intercepted his rush aft. With his back turned to him the cook stood between him and the companionway. Halfway out of the companionway the captain was struggling to gain the deck, one hand grasping the coaming, the other pressed to his forehead, which was streaming with blood.

As he looked, the boy saw the cook start forward with upraised musket. His bruises forgotten, every nerve and muscle responding to the call to protect his hero, Andrew, a red mist before his eyes, took three rapid steps and leaped upon the shoulders of the cook.

His fingers closed round the wizened throat, and a surge of anger, in which all his past dislike

and loathing of the treacherous hound rose to the surface, added strength to his fingers.

He bore his enemy backwards to the deck, rejoicing in the crack with which the Frenchman's skull met the hard planking. Whether he was dead or not, Andrew neither knew nor cared. It was sufficient for him that for the moment he was unconscious and incapable of harm. They were two to one on the poop now, for there was no sign of Dhura, and if he could stand by the captain's side, they should be more than a match for the mate.

Scrambling to his feet, he stooped to pick up the musket which had fallen from the cook's grasp. As his hands reached out for the weapon, another pair of hands, huge and knotted with the backs covered with thick hair, seized his own.

In a moment he was swung upright and off his feet like a puppy, and flung violently through the air.

The shrouds saved him from going overboard and broke the violence of his fall. He lay crumpled up against the bulwarks, too dazed for a moment to realize what had happened.

His first thought was for the captain, and glancing towards the companionway saw the

Heanan was too quick.

already blood-stained butt-end of the mate's musket lifted to strike his hero.

The captain, half-blinded by the blood from the wound in his head from the shot aimed by François in the cabin, made a gallant attempt to meet the attack. Stepping out on to the deck, he tried to close with the mate and avoid the blow. Heanan was too quick, the captain too weak, and the mate stepping back to main-

tain his distance brought the heavy weapon down at the moment that Andrew, with a supreme effort, once more gained his feet and started to the rescue.

Raising his arms the captain endeavoured to break the force of the blow as it fell, but with all the strength of his powerful arms and shoulders behind it, the mate's musket broke through his guard and crashed down on his head.

With a cry of anger and horror Andrew started forward. Before he had made more than three steps everything seemed to swim round him. He saw in a mist of darkness the mate turn in his direction. The *Jane* seemed to be revolving, like the globe in Dominie Ogilvie's schoolroom, on her own axis, his legs refused to move, and stretching out his arms towards his beloved captain in a last desperate effort to reach his side, he sank to the deck and remembered no more.

CHAPTER II

MR. HEANAN TAKES COMMAND

ANDREW, slowly recovering consciousness, opened his eyes and gazed around him in bewilderment. He found that though he could move his legs freely his wrists were bound securely behind his back.

Dhura was at the wheel, and a light breeze, just sufficient to fill the sails, urged the *Jane* gently through the calm sea.

Gradually he pieced together the details of what had happened before he fainted. As he realized what it meant, a hopeless anger came over him. His beloved captain and the faithful Patterson murdered brutally in cold blood, the *Jane* in the hands of the mutineers, and he himself a helpless prisoner.

Tears of sorrow and rage came into his eyes as he remembered the last savage attack on the captain by the mate. If only he had gone to the

captain's cabin instead of rushing on deck when awakened by the shot, all might have been well. Together they could at least have done more than when divided; and perhaps, he thought miserably, if he had stood by his captain's side they would have killed him too, instead of throwing him contemptuously aside like a child, and leaving him bound and helpless. Why had he forgotten when he attacked Gautiez that the mate was behind him? Bitterly he accused himself of hasty folly. He had had a lesson he would never forget as to the need of thinking quickly and clearly before acting, but the lesson had come too late to save his hero.

What a feckless, conceited bairn he had proved himself, instead of the hero he had begun to believe himself to be!

He tried hard to persuade himself that it was all an evil dream, that it was just Dhura's spell at the wheel, and that the captain would be coming on deck in a moment after his breakfast, for a look round the horizon and his morning walk up and down the tiny poop.

As if in mocking irony a face appeared at that moment at the head of the companion; not the bronzed open countenance of his captain

with the steady blue eyes and the frank open smile. The close-set eyes and the livid scar were followed by the wide shoulders of Mr. Heanan.

The mate stepped out on deck, and after a look aloft at the sails went to the wheel, and gazed for a moment into the binnacle to mark the ship's course. He said something to Dhura in a low voice, and then came over to where Andrew lay.

" There's more ways of getting things done than by slashing at them, Mr. Andrew," he said, quoting the very words he had said once before.

" I ken that fine the now," answered Andrew bitterly. " You can shoot a better man than yourself in his bunk, and beat him to death with a musket end in cold blood. Oh aye, there's more ways than one, and ye're master of them all, I'm thinking."

The mate's gaze wavered for a moment, as though the boy's words had touched him on the raw. But only for a moment.

" You've a fine spirit, Andrew," he said, dropping for the first time the " Mr.," as though to mark the change in relationship.

" I always said that. I've always been your friend, lad, and I'm willing to be so still if you'll behave yourself and not get saucy with François and Dhura. If your own life is to be saved, it's only me that can do it."

" I'm no caring much one way or the other," said Andrew hopelessly. " I'd as lief be dead as take any favour from a murdering gang of pirates anyways."

" Hard words, Andrew, and foolish words. There's more ways of persuasion than soft words, as you'll find to your cost."

The mate turned on his heel, leaving Andrew wondering what villainy was still in store.

Taking stock of his position, he found that his bound wrists were attached by a rope to the shrouds, and that he could stand upright and even move about within a semicircle of a few yards.

He got up and stretched himself. His head still ached, and he was stiff and bruised all over from his falls, but he found that no limbs were broken.

" A fina morning, Signor Andrew," said a mocking voice from the wheel.

His first impulse was to ignore Dhura, but

as the man appeared to be ready to talk, he thought he might find out exactly how affairs now stood in the ship.

" The morn's all right," he answered grudgingly. " Will you have murdered Smith and Strachan as well, forbye ? "

The Italian grinned, as though Andrew had made an excellent joke.

" Down below in fo'c'sle, all tied good with plenty rope. Must keep sailors to worka sheep."

" They'll do mickle work for a pack of dirty mutineers. You canna force them if they're no willing."

" That we see bymeby," said Dhura, with a venomous look at the boy. " François very clever to make men worka," adding with a snarl, " he make leetle boys worka too. Vairy clever, François."

Andrew realized that he was merely irritating the Italian, and that though at the moment he cared little for his own life, he had companions in misfortune whose lives depended upon the whim of the murderers.

He therefore made no reply to the sinister threat of Dhura, but turning his back upon

him gazed out to sea. Having no other means of determining the present course of the brig, he tried to make a rough calculation by the position of the sun, which was now about halfway between the horizon and the zenith.

Judging the sun to be about S.E., and off the *Jane's* starboard quarter, her course must be somewhere between north and east.

Obviously then the mutineers were not making for the Canary Islands and the rendezvous with the felucca. He recalled Don Sylva's orders that no murder was to be done, and that François' attitude at the interview with the Jew the night the *Jane* sailed showed that the Frenchman had a wholesome fear of that suave and courtly figure sitting in the richly-furnished office in the dingy house at Gibraltar.

What more natural then that, having disobeyed orders, the murderers dare not face their employer? Add to this natural greed, and the desire that the booty should be shared by as few as possible, and there was excellent reason for them to steer clear of the felucca.

What were their plans, then? Far away to the nor'east lay his beloved Scotland, and yet it seemed incredible that the mutineers should

sail for a home port, where their crime must surely come to light.

His heart went out in longing for the cobble-stones of Leith and the gloomy house from which he had been so anxious to escape.

His thoughts were interrupted by the return of the mate with François. The Frenchman had a wicked glint in his shifty eyes as Andrew met his look, but for the moment at any rate it was plain that Heanan's position as self-constituted master of the ship would protect him from the hatred of the cook.

" Before you go to the fo'c'sle to join your friends you are going to see your late captain set out on his last voyage."

It was the mate's tone rather than the words which chilled Andrew with sudden fear as he braced himself to meet the next move of his enemies.

" Did you by any chance ever hear how the old Norsemen paid their last respects to their captains ? " Heanan spoke in his old level voice, with more refinement in the accents than one would have expected from the mate of a little trading vessel.

Andrew kept his eyes fixed on a point on the

distant horizon as though he had not heard the words.

" They used to set him adrift in a small boat with his weapons, so that he might be able to hunt and fight when he got to Valhalla," the mate went on, speaking rather fast, and, as Andrew thought, covering some deep feeling with a show of off-handedness. " I fear we cannot spare the weapons, but we are going to give him a companion to serve him on the other side."

Andrew turned his head and looked the mate fairly in the eye.

" Can you no say what you mean ? " he said. " It's scared you are, Mr. Heanan, for your share in the blood that's been shed this day. Scared too of they foreigners ; but you'll pay the penalty, and I'd no like to be *your* companion when you go out on your last voyage."

The mate flushed angrily. " You're a fool, lad, for all your wit. It's not sharp answers will serve you, nor playing the preacher, as you'll very soon see."

He turned to François. " Lend a hand to get the boat over the side ; the sooner we get the job done the better."

They went for'ard and started to unlash the small boat which was lashed to the covering of the fore hatch. Unbolting a portion of the bulwarks hinged for the purpose, they made fast a rope to the bow of the boat and launched her over the side.

Coming aft to the main hatch, they busied themselves for a moment out of sight of Andrew, reappearing a moment later carrying between them the body of the murdered Patterson. White with horror Andrew saw them lower their burden into the boat and return to the hatch.

Again they reappeared, and Andrew felt the hot tears rise to his eyes as he recognized the form of his beloved captain. The body was lowered into the boat, and with his knife the cook cut the painter.

Andrew could bear no more. Turning to the rail he buried his face in his arms and let the tears come unchecked. "The beasts!" he sobbed; "the murdering beasts!"

The mate touched him on the shoulder. "Come, boy, you've got to go below with the others. Don't forget what I said. It's no good being saucy and rebellious. If you behave yourself I'll do my best for you; if not—well

you'll not expect to get much mercy shown you."

Andrew made an effort to control himself and stood up. There was no fight left in him. If he had been free he would have plunged over the side to join his captain in the little boat drifting away astern. The cook unfastened the rope which bound his wrists from the shrouds, and the mate ordered him to go for'ard. It came to him then that they had deliberately forced him to be a witness of the casting adrift of the boat, believing it would break his nerve.

He walked up to Heanan very erect, and said quietly, " You're a pack of cowardly swine ! "

Turning on his heel he followed the Frenchman forward to the fo'c'sle.

CHAPTER III

THE BETTER PART OF VALOUR

GAUTIEZ unbolted the doorway of the forecastle companion with an evil leer on his cunning face.

"You find your friends below, Mistaire Andrew," he said with a mocking bow.

"It'll be a welcome change to find myself in honest company anyways," replied Andrew, determined not to let his enemy think he had lost heart.

"P'raps you find yourself in ze company of ze brave capitain ver' soon, eh?"

Andrew resisted the temptation to butt the cook in the stomach with his head as he had the pale-faced clerk at Gibraltar, and scrambled down the stairs into the gloomy little space where the crew lived.

Four bunks running round the sides, a bare table, the men's sea-chests, and a cupboard at the for'ard end made up the furnishing of this dark

and cockroach-infested space, the only light for which came from a small skylight in the deck above, and from the hatchway.

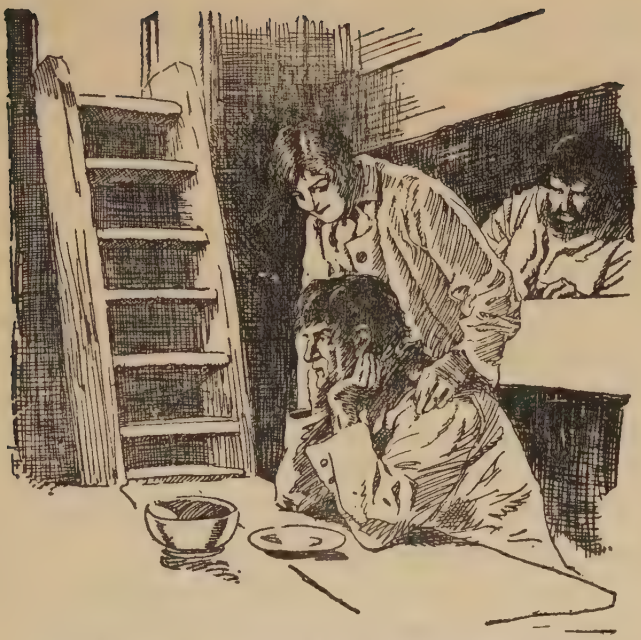
At the table sat Robert Strachan, his face buried in his hands, in an attitude of deep dejection. He did not look up as Andrew came down the ladder, and for a few moments the boy waited for his eyes to become accustomed to the gloom. Then he stepped forward and laid his hand on Strachan's shoulder.

" We maun be thinking how to get the better of they murdering brutes," he said.

" And hoo should we be gettin' the better ? " said the seaman dully. " They've kilt the captain and puir Patterson, Frenchie said, and they'll be killin' us if we'll no join them."

" We're no deid yet, ye haverin' loon," said a deep voice out of the gloom, and looking up Andrew saw the head of Smith peeping out of the top bunk on the starboard side. " We'll be puttin' oor three heids together the noo to find out some way o' gettin' the ship back."

He spoke cheerfully, and Andrew felt his spirits rising. If he could not bring his friends back to life, there was still the *Jane* to be taken out of the hands of the mutineers.



" We maun be thinking how to get the better of they murdering brutes."

" We're steering about nor'east," he said.

" That'll do us fine," answered Smith. " If we get in the track of the shipping frae the Channel, we'll mebbe be able to hail some vessel and scupper the gang fine."

Before Andrew could reply they heard the bolt of the hatch being withdrawn and steps coming down the ladder. Smith's head disappeared under the blankets, Strachan con-

tinued to stare hopelessly before him, while Andrew remained where he was, awaiting the next move.

Mr. Heanan came into the fo'c'sle carrying a musket, followed by Gautiez with a coil of fine rope in his hand.

" I'm going to give you one more chance of joining us," said the mate. " There's no use in crying over spilt milk, and there's still a share of the dollars waiting for you. You've no choice, it seems to me, and if you refuse to come over "—he paused significantly—" well, you know what will happen to you."

There was a moment's silence in the tiny fo'c'sle as the mate, his musket resting in the crook of his arm, looked steadily at Andrew, as though taking for granted that he would speak for the others.

" I've given you my answer," said the boy quietly, " and I've no changed my mind yet."

" I'm thinkin' the same mesel'," chimed in the voice of Smith from his bunk.

" What about you, Strachan ? " asked Heanan. " Surely you're not so foolish as to want to die instead of joining us and taking your share of the dollars."

Strachan did not even turn his head to look at the speaker. In a toneless voice, as though speaking against his will, he said, "I'm no carin' for the siller; I'd as lief stand in with Mr. Andrew and Smith."

The mate's voice changed from oily persuasiveness to harsh anger.

"We'll see what a little of François' latest idea will do to change your minds. Gautiez, take this musket and give me the rope. If they show any sign of resistance you can shoot, and shoot straight."

"I shoot straight all right, saire. I good shot in the dark, eh?"

He grinned savagely at Andrew as he spoke, as though he hoped that the boy would give him a chance to shoot him down as he had already done to the captain.

"None of that, Gautiez," said Heanan sharply. "It'll be time enough to be funny when we're through with this business."

He turned again to Andrew. "I'm going to lash you up to the bunk stanchions, and in half an hour's time, if you've changed your mind, you can give a shout. If you leave it much later, I doubt if you'll be able to shout."

With a cold fear at his heart, Andrew submitted to the inevitable. The mate tied him firmly up, giving him little room to move. Smith was ordered out of his bunk and also lashed up; the same was done to Strachan, who, trembling in every limb, seemed to have completely lost his nerve, though he uttered no word of surrender.

The hatch was slammed to, and they were left in the gloom of their prison, wondering what vileness was to come to them.

"It'll be starvin' us they'll be doin'," moaned Strachan in a quavering voice.

"If ye'd use the wee brain the guid God's given ye," said Smith, "we'd hear less of such-like fule talk. There'll be something muckle quicker nor that comin' to us. A half-hoor yon mate said, did he no?"

"Aye, we'll ken quick enough," said Andrew bitterly, "and that's a gey sight better than waiting," he added, determined not to let Smith see the despair in his heart.

A strange sound, like the insistent gnawing of a rat upon wood, made itself heard in the silence which settled on the little group of prisoners; a steady boring sound suddenly

broken by a slight splintering of woodwork. A moment later the sound started again. There was no mistaking what was going on, for the sound came from the for'ard bulkhead.

"It's borin' the bulkhead they are," said Smith in a puzzled voice.

They strained their ears to listen. Six times the noise ceased and restarted. Silence again fell. No further movement was heard.

"Do you no smell burning?" said Andrew.

Smith took several deep sniffs.

"The murderin' dogs!" he broke out savagely. "They're goin' to suffocate us. Can ye break free, Mr. Andrew? We'll hae to stop they holes in the bulkheid."

Andrew struggled violently to get free, but the mate had done his work too well, and the only result of his efforts seemed to be to tighten his bonds.

Smoke was now pouring into the already stifling fo'c'sle, a pungent bitter smoke as though from old ropes well soaked in tar.

Andrew realized that the mutineers would stick at nothing to force him and his companions to join them. Even with their assistance they would still be short-handed when it came to

working the *Jane* up the treacherous coasts of Scotland, where even at this season of the year sudden gales were likely to spring up, bringing the short fierce cross-seas which required careful seamanship in a small vessel such as theirs. By such methods as slow suffocation Heanan and Gautiez hoped to force them to at least help in working the ship.

He set his quick mind to work. Something must be done, and done quickly. They must decide one way or the other while there was still time to bargain. Taught by the events of the past few hours, he realized that he must use his brain rather than his muscle.

The heavy fumes were slowly filling the confined space of the little fo'c'sle. Their eyes were smarting, and their lungs filled with the acrid smoke until they were gasping for breath.

" Will you trust me to make terms with the hounds ? " he gasped.

"Aye, aye, Mr. Andrew," said Smith ; " juist ye take charge, and we'll maun be followin'."

" Use all the breath you've got and shout, the two of you."

Together they shouted with all the voice they had left. In the pause which followed they

heard the bolt of the hatch being withdrawn, and a pale light filtered down the companion through the heavy fog of blue-grey smoke.

" Below there, do you surrender ? " came Heanan's voice.

" Stop they fagots of yours, and we're willing to discuss terms with you," shouted Andrew, finding it difficult to speak without choking.

The mate shouted orders to the others, and the skylight was opened, allowing the wreathing smoke to escape into the open air, and bringing relief to the bursting lungs of the prisoners.

After giving a few minutes for the atmosphere of the fo'c'sle to become bearable, Heanan and Gautiez came down the stairs.

" You haven't taken long to change your minds," said the mate, as the cook unlashed them from the bunk stanchions.

" It's as well to ken when you're beat, and I doubt you're as glad as ourselves."

Heanan glanced at him suspiciously.

" I'm not too certain of these sudden changes. I'll still be keeping a sharp eye to windward."

" The weather's aye uncertain even in these latitudes," said Andrew dryly. " If you'll let us up on deck, we'll get some of this fog out of

our lungs, and mebbe make terms to our mutual advantage."

" Meanwhile I'll be keeping the musket handy in case of squalls. You're a bit impetuous, Andrew, and I give you fair warning that if you break out again, François will have you for certain."

" One murder more or less would no worry him," said Andrew grimly, glancing at the cook, who drew back his lips in a savage snarl. " But I'll no be troubling him yet awhile anyhow."

" If ye've finished palavering," broke in the deep voice of Smith, " I'd be likin' a wee breath of fresh air."

Without waiting for permission the seaman made his way to the foot of the companion, followed by Strachan and Andrew. With Heanan and the cook bringing up the rear, they again stood on the deck of the *Jane*, from which all traces of the brutal murders had now been removed.

CHAPTER IV

SAIL HO!

PETER SMITH, still limping from the wound in his foot inflicted by the marline-spike, sat down on the fore hatch and calmly cut up some tobacco in the palm of his hand, filled a short clay pipe, and remained silent, puffing away quite unconcernedly, as though he had just come on deck for a smoke and a mouthful of fresh air after his watch below.

Andrew walked over to the weather side, and leaning over the gunwale inhaled the fresh salt-laden air, filling his lungs with the breeze and allowing his smarting eyes to recover from the effects of the smoke-laden atmosphere of the fo'c'sle.

Strachan remained leaning against the fo'c'sle hatch in an attitude of deep dejection, while Heanan and Gautiez went forward into the bows, where they engaged in earnest conversation.

" Course aboot nor'-nor'-east," said Smith, at length breaking the silence, " and we're picking up the trade wind."

Andrew left the bulwarks and joined him on the hatch, anxious to explain the line he intended to take in their negotiations with the mate.

Before he could speak, however, Heanan came aft, followed by Gautiez.

" You mentioned the word ' terms ' down below," said Heanan, addressing himself to Andrew ; " you'd better understand that the only terms we will agree to are that you three join us as part of the crew and take your share of the dollars."

" Plenty more smoke ready down below," added Gautiez.

" I'll do all the talking myself, thank you, Gautiez," snapped the mate.

" 'Twould be awkward for you if we refuse," said Andrew, " and well you ken it. It seems you're going north, and you'd be a poor sailor to risk the ship and the dollars with François and Dhura when you can come to terms with us."

" Yes, that's the one card you've got. I see that," replied Heanan, " but I'd work the ship

" Course aboot nor'-nor'-east," said Smith.

single-handed before I'd run the risk of treachery."

" A fine word for ye to use, Mr. Heanan," broke in Smith, " after killin' your ain captain, and betraying your trust as mate."

Heanan turned on the seaman angrily.

" When you're asked for your opinion it will be time to give it, my man. And when you address me you'll use ' sir.' I'm captain of this

brig, and if you refuse to recognize it, you can get below at once and take the penalty."

"It's no a time for quarrelling," interposed Andrew; "the question is, can we come to terms without signing on as your—confederates. It comes to this, Mr. Heanan; will you be willing to take our word to no give you away so long as we are on the ship?"

"And what's to happen when we get ashore?"

"That's a gey while off, I'm thinking," said Andrew. "You can just take our word we'll no make any attempt to escape, or to communicate with any passing ship; and if we get ashore, we can discuss fresh terms."

"And if we refuse to accept?"

"You'll no refuse, I'm thinking, Mr. Heanan, unless you're going to risk the *Jane*. You're welcome to murder us when we get ashore. You'll get a bigger share of the dollars in any case."

"Johnson told me your father was a lawyer, and I can well believe it," said the mate dryly. "Well, I'm inclined to accept the proposal, but I must talk it over with François and Dhura first. You three will give your word to stay here while we go aft to Dhura, I take it?"

"Aye, we'll stay here, Mr. Heanan," said Andrew; "we're no likely to swim for it, and we're no so much in love with the fo'c'sle as to wish to be going below again just yet."

Ten minutes later Heanan came forward with François.

"We've decided to accept your terms, Andrew. You'll give us your promise to obey my orders as captain in working the brig, and make no attempt to escape or to communicate with any ship we may sight."

"Aye, and you pass your word that so long as we keep our side there'll no be any dirty work from yon François or Dhura."

"I give you my word on that, Andrew, and I mean it when I say that I hope when we get ashore you'll be sensible enough to come in with us."

"Time enough when we get there for that. Well, I give you my word, Mr. Heanan."

"And what about you, Smith, and you, Strachan?"

"Aye, aye, sir," boomed Smith, "I'm with Mr. Andrew and gie ye my word."

"I stand in with the ithers. Ye can hae my promise—sir," said Strachan dully.

"Very well, we've got to take each other's word about this, Andrew, but I warn you that if any of you give any cause for suspicion it's the last chance you'll get."

"It's no on our side the promise 'll be broken," said Andrew, getting up and going once more to the side of the ship.

He felt the strain of having brought off the bargain, and wanted a few moments to pull himself together. He must keep his wits about him now, for he was the commander of the little band of three. Not only did their lives depend upon his guidance, but to him if to any one must fall the task of bringing the murderers to justice when the time was ripe.

His thoughts wandered away to Leith. It seemed years ago that his mother had come to his room and told him that they were to go down to the jetty, where the fishing-boat would be waiting for them. He remembered his own tears and those of his mother now that the time had come to separate. He had been such a bairn then. Tears seemed part of a childhood long left behind. It seemed, he thought, as though he had entered upon youth from childhood when he first stepped upon the deck of

the *Jane* off Burntisland, and that hardly more than an hour ago he had come to man's estate and to the leadership of men. A lump rose in his throat as he thought of his beloved captain, and he clenched his fists fiercely with a fresh resolve to see justice done upon his murderers.

"If you'll kindly step over here, Andrew, we'll arrange the watches," he heard Heanan say presently. He tore himself back from the memory of the past and rejoined the group around the hatch. "You, Andrew, and Dhura will be with me in the starboard watch; François will act as mate, and have with him Smith and Strachan. The starboard watch will start at eight bells, when you'll relieve the wheel, please, Andrew. You, Gautiez, had best get to the galley and see about dinner, and take your watch below with the others from twelve to four."

"Where'll I be sleeping, sir?" asked Andrew.

"You've got your bunk aft, and you'll stay there. There's no reason why you should go into the fo'c'sle," replied Heanan. "I'd as soon have you under my eye as not."

Andrew said nothing more. He hated the idea of hearing Heanan moving about in the

cabin on the other side of the thin partition, and of seeing him in possession of the captain's quarters. Gautiez, too, would live aft, he supposed, and would expect to be treated with the respect due to the mate. He would much have preferred to go to the fo'c'sle, but he thought it wiser to say nothing more. At all costs he must avoid giving cause for suspicion, and after all he would be able to see Smith and Strachan during the dog watches. In any case, nothing could be done now until the *Jane* reached the port for which she was bound and they set foot on shore once more.

With a feeling of utter loneliness, the bitter anger still in his heart against the murderers, he made his way aft, to take a rest before going on watch at eight bells.

He turned out at seven bells to get his dinner. Heanan insisted upon him eating it at the cabin table with him.

"You can fetch the food from the galley and lay the table," he said, "but you're the owner's son, and your place is here with me."

His gorge rose at the prospect of eating with the men who had treacherously killed his captain. He distrusted Heanan's smooth words

far more than he feared his anger. He must, however, go through with it now, and he forced himself to eat a little pea-soup and salt-pork hash.

The silent meal over, Andrew cleared the table, leaving a place for Gautiez, who would take his dinner here at eight bells, and went back to his tiny cubicle.

Eight bells sounded from the poop, and he went on deck to relieve Dhura at the wheel.

The Italian grinned at him, showing a broken row of discoloured teeth.

" By the wind," he reported as Andrew took over the spokes.

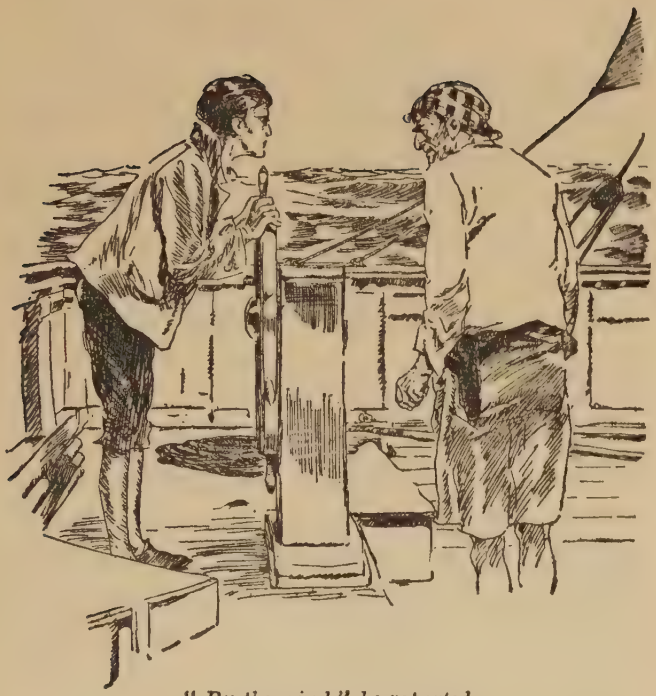
" By the wind," repeated Andrew, who found that the trade wind had freshened, and hauled a point or two north, forcing the *Jane* to sail close-hauled on a course a point or two to the west of north.

The sea was a dancing mass of blue and white. Clouds in fantastic shapes like great clumps of thistledown were blown headlong across the azure sky. With every sail drawing, the brig was putting her best foot forward as though eager to get as far away as possible from the scene of the tragedy. Somewhere astern

there, thought Andrew, a tiny boat was rising and falling on the long Atlantic rollers bearing its freight of death.

Even now there was a merciful numbness around his heart when he thought of his captain. Somehow it seemed impossible that he should never again gaze into those twinkling blue eyes which had first met his own as he gazed down from the jetty at Leith only a few weeks ago. Well, he was no longer the feckless bairn he had been that day. These few weeks had brought him the experience of a grown man, and he would need all a grown man's forethought and determination if he was to bring the murderers to justice.

Steering by the wind in such a steady breeze made little demand upon his skill, and his mind began to grapple with the problem before him. The immediate task as he saw it was to allay the suspicions of the mutineers, and to show a ready willingness to bear their part in the working of the ship. They must put off to the last possible moment the crisis when Heanan and Gautiez would realize that as soon as his parole was expired, he would use every endeavour to get into touch with the authorities



" By the wind," he reported.

and to see that justice was meted out. He must play his only card with skill and daring, for once the need of hands to work the ship was past, it would be in the interest of the others to reduce the number of shares into which the booty must be divided ; the only sure way to do this was by following the methods already applied to the captain and Patterson.

His duty then was not only to bring the

murderers to justice, but to save the lives of himself and his companions. For a moment his heart sank as he realized the magnitude of his task. For he was shrewd enough to know that in Heanan and Gautiez he was dealing with more than ordinary rascality. Heanan, though there might still be a spark of humanity and decent feeling deep down in some almost forgotten corner of his heart, was perhaps the most dangerous of the trio. François might at any time fall by his own low cunning, which looked little farther than the immediate result desired, but the mate had a cool resourceful daring, a calculated length of view that laid plans which might only come to maturity many days or even weeks ahead.

Andrew had an uneasy feeling that Heanan's ready acceptance of the terms offered had behind it some deep purpose which might well be far more dangerous than the low crookedness and blood-lust of the cook.

The thought of Heanan hatching some further scheme to checkmate any possible move on his own part brought back his courage. He would fight the thing through now, with every fibre of his being concentrated on his task.

To the memory of his hero whose lifeless body was tossing restlessly on the waves, he dedicated the work ahead.

His eyes swept the ring of the far horizon, the rim of the great circle which for so many days had remained unbroken by any sign of human life.

Suddenly his body stiffened with excitement. On the port bow, not more than three miles away, a tower of snowy canvas stood up sharply against the blue of the sky.

Flying jibs and stunsails, double topgallant sails, royals, and skysails showing in sharp contrast against the foreshortened black-painted hull, with a furrow of gleaming foam at her forefoot, a full-rigged ship was bearing down upon them.

She must have been right ahead when she first broke the skyline of the horizon, and therefore invisible to him at the wheel.

Not a soul was visible on the deck of the *Jane*, and for one swift moment Andrew was tempted to take the matter into his own hands, and make a bid for freedom and justice.

To hold on until the strange ship was closer, to let the brig fall off on the wind so as to bring

her alongside, and then to bring her right up into the wind, and hail for help.

His word had been passed, and in a flash Andrew knew that his promise must be kept. No matter what treachery and cruelty the mutineers had showed themselves capable of, no matter what further baseness they might have in view, he could do no less than keep the promise given.

His clear young voice rang out above the sound of wind and sea: "Sail ho! Close up on the port bow!"

CHAPTER V

BROACHING THE DOLLARS

GAUTIEZ was the first to appear on the poop, followed a few moments later by Heanan, who had delayed long enough to put on Captain Johnson's green coat, gold watch and fob, and beaver hat. Forward in the bows Smith, Strachan, and Dhura formed a little group in earnest discussion as to the nationality of the stranger.

Heanan came to the wheel and stood beside Andrew, who wondered what attitude the mutineers intended to take ; whether the mate would hail the strange vessel and pitch some cock and bull story, or whether he would let her pass in silence.

" There's a picture for you, Andrew," he said unconcernedly. " The finest picture in the world, a full-rigged clipper under all sail. She must be doing all of fifteen knots, I should say."

The clipper must indeed have been coming along at a great speed, for she was now within a few cable lengths of the *Jane*, converging slightly upon the brig, though likely to pass astern before the two vessels came any closer. Heanan ordered the Frenchman to hoist the ensign at the peak.

"Put your wheel up, boy, four points and bring us under her quarter," said Heanan suddenly.

Andrew obeyed, and the little brig paid off until she seemed to be hurling herself straight at the strange ship.

It was a bold policy under the circumstances, and a finely judged piece of seamanship. So rapidly were the two vessels moving that the *Jane* passed within a short biscuit's throw of the clipper. That the brig should thus seem to invite an exchange of courtesies would certainly insure against any suspicion on the part of the captain of the ship, while the boldness of their leader would inspire confidence in his wisdom and courage in the minds of Gautiez and Dhura.

"You see how I trust you, Andrew," said Heanan in a low voice as he sprang to the lee

side and put his two hands to his mouth ready to hail.

Before he could do so, however, a stentorian voice came from the bridge of the ship.

"Brig ahoy! Report *Lark of Canterbury*, latitude and longitude, and all's well."

"Aye, aye! Will report you at Plymouth. Where're you bound?"

"Cape Town, general cargo out of London."

"Good luck, *Lark of Canterbury*."

"Good luck, brig."

Heanan turned to Andrew with a grin. "They didn't even think us worth while asking our name," he said, "much less get their ensign out and dip to us. A haughty crowd those clipper captains, Andrew, though I reckon their day is nearly over. Put her back on the wind."

"You've certainly got nerve," said Andrew, as he brought the brig up to the wind, "and you'll be needing it all, I'm thinking."

"Nerves and brains, and caution to the tongue. It's the last you're lacking in, boy, and it's that'll bring you down in the end."

Again Andrew felt a chill at his heart as though the mate was, under his quiet and almost

conciliatory manner, laying a trap into which he was deliberately though unconsciously walking.

For the next two days, the trade wind holding fresh and there being little to do as to the working of the brig, all hands were busy making bags from a large roll of canvas up from the fore-peak.

From Dhura Andrew learnt that the bags were for the purpose of stowing the dollars before they were divided up, and that the mate had had high words with Gautiez when the latter had wished to broach the casks at once instead of waiting until the bags were made.

As there was only one sailmaker's palm on board, which was used by Heanan and François in turn, Andrew's hands were sore and blistered by the heavy work, and he was thankful when the mate announced that there were now sufficient to hold the whole amount of money in the hold.

In the second dog watch on the third day after the mutiny, the hatch-covers were removed, a tackle rigged to the main yard, and the barrels hoisted on deck.

Heanan remained as cool and deliberate as ever, as though the handling and sharing out of

silver dollars was an everyday matter, but Gautiez and the Italian, with flushed faces and shining eyes, worked with a feverish energy quite unlike their usual lethargy when at work.

Andrew himself felt only angry disgust mingled with shame at finding himself handling the stolen treasure. Smith was taking his trick at the wheel, but Strachan showed signs of restless excitement when Heanan with a hatchet split the top of the first cask and a shining cascade of freshly-minted dollars poured out on the grimy deck.

A few coins rolled down to leeward into the scuppers, and were eagerly retrieved by the two foreigners. The contents of each cask were put into bags and carried into the cabin.

It was dark by the time the last bag had been stacked in the cabin, and the ship's company, with the exception of Strachan, who had relieved Smith at the wheel, gathered under the swinging lamp to listen to Heanan's estimate of the amount and the share each one would receive.

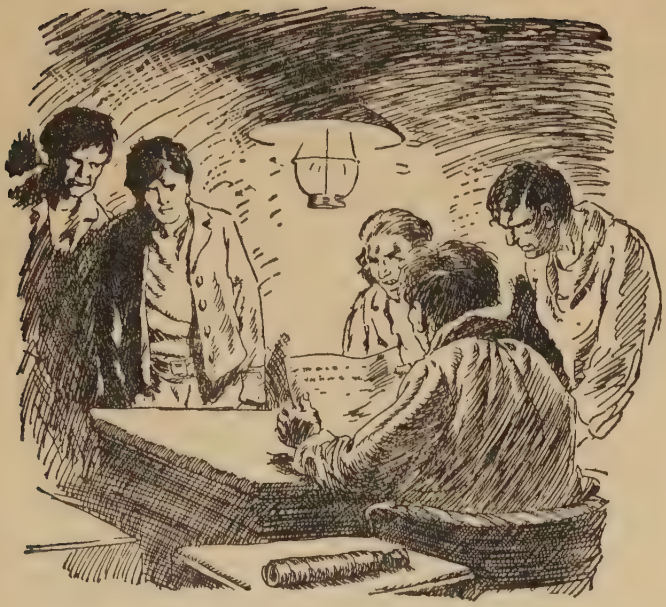
Seated at the table in the chair always occupied by the captain, the mate studied the piece of paper on which he had made a tally of the number of dollars contained in the casks.

François stood by his side, Dhura was seated at the table, while Andrew and Smith remained standing outside the yellow circle of lamplight, their presence having been ordered by Heanan much against their own wish.

" Eight barrels," began the mate, " as shown in the memorandum signed by Don Sylva himself. Six of eighteen gallons, one of nine, and one of seven. If any of you like to satisfy yourselves that this is correct, you can read the memorandum."

As Andrew and Smith remained silent, and Dhura shook his head and shrugged his shoulder as a sign that he could not read, the mate after a pause continued—

" There are a thousand dollars in each of the bags, except the one I have put away in my chest with a hundred and eighty dollars, to be used for any expenses we may have before separating. It would have been all fair and square for Gautiez and me to have had a third each, and to have divided the rest among you, but from the beginning we said that you would have a bigger share than that. The division will be seven bags each for Gautiez and me as captain and mate, and six bags for the rest——"



The mate studied the piece of paper.

" What's zat you say ? " broke in the harsh voice of François ; " t'irty-eight t'ousan' dollars, an' only t'ree to 'ave ze money. Smith, Strachan, an' ze boy, zey refuse, eh ? You say we share all ze money. See, here I 'ave the addition," and he pulled out of his pocket a grimy scrap of paper which he thrust under the mate's nose.

" Feefteen t'ousan' you and me, eight t'ousan' for Dhura. *Sacré nom*, you no play tricks wiz François, mistaire."

"Waita one minute," gasped Dhura, livid with rage as he rose from his seat. "I too worka a leetle sum." He flourished a piece of paper in the Frenchman's face.

"Thirteen thousand for you and Heanan, dat's twenty-six, eh? and twelve for me, eh? You wanta me do all the dirty work and take eight thousand, eh? *Per Dios*, I show you——"

"You're both fools," broke in the cold voice of Heanan. "Bigger fools than I took you for. If the others don't come in with us there'll be their share as well, another eighteen thousand, and we'll divide that equally."

"After you tella me you make a fair division," screamed Dhura.

"You say you promise ze others have nozing at all," shouted François, flinging his arms above his head. "You t'ink I let zat *sacré* boy 'ave ze money—first I kill him myself——"

Heanan rose from his seat and drew a pistol from his belt.

"If Andrew and Smith will kindly retire to the fo'c'sle for a few minutes, we'll just settle this little problem in arithmetic," he said coolly. "Meanwhile," he turned to François, "I warn you that pistols are apt to go off

without giving any notice of their intention. Move round and sit down at the end of the table. You, Dhura, sit by his side.—Well, boy," he broke off, seeing that Andrew made no sign of leaving the cabin, " did you hear what I said ? "

" Aye, I heard right enough," said Andrew; ' but if it's our share you're quarrelling about, you're wasting your time. You ken fine we're no wanting to stand in with you."

The mate uttered a furious oath. " Is it disobeying orders you are ? " he said, raising his pistol till the boy looked straight down the barrel. " I'm captain here, as I've told you before. If you don't learn the lesson and obey orders by getting out of the cabin in half a minute, there'll be one more share for the rest of us. Now march ! "

Andrew met the menacing barrel with unwavering eye. " We'll go, and we're no wishing to disobey orders. But I wouldna let you think we've changed our minds."

And turning on his heels he led the way out of the cabin, followed leisurely by Smith.

They lit the smoky lamp in the fo'c'sle, and sat down on their sea-chests. Smith, as im-

perturbable as ever, filled and lit his pipe in silence. Andrew beat a tattoo on the side of the chest with his heels and whistled softly to himself.

"What d'you make of yon scallywags, Peter?" he said at last.

"I'm juist wonderin' what's at the back of it," answered the seaman. "Ye ken, Mr. Andrew, it's Heanan I'm more afeared of than the Frenchie. He's too saft spoke, and ower deep for honest folk to ken which way he's gaun."

"Aye, it's Heanan we've got to watch. He's no acting square, and I'm wondering what his real game might be."

"To save his ain skin wad be Mr. Murderin' Heanan's game," said Smith dryly. "It's what he's intendin' tae us I'm scared of."

"Maybe you'll no agree with me, Peter, but I sometimes think Heanan's fair sick and tired of violence, and that it's due to him that I'm sitting here at this moment. I'd no care to be left alone with yon cook unless I was armed."

"He's a blùidthirsty little rat, yon François, but a mon kens fine what he's up to. Heanan's

got some verra deep scheming on back of his head. Ye feel with him that ye're juist walking straight into the trap he's laid for ye."

These words startled Andrew, coinciding as they did so exactly with what he himself had been thinking. He jumped up from his seat and strode backwards and forwards up and down the tiny fo'c'sle, racking his brain to work out any possible scheme Heanan might be hatching.

" I can no get farther than this, Peter," he said at last. " It's greed that's at the bottom of yon mate's share in this mutiny, and he's working all he can to get as much of the treasure for himself as he can. So long as he pretends to be keeping our share, he's got it in his own possession, and, as I have heard my father say, it's possession is the best part of the law."

" Aye, ye're recht as far as ye go, Mr. Andrew, but I'm no satisfied that he's no got something a gey sight mair cunnin' ready tae spring on us later on."

" Well, we can do nothing more than keep a sharp look-out, and do our duty, Peter. We'll pull through in the end, and Heanan's no the only one with a bittie brain on the *Jane*."

" Below there ! " hailed the voice of Dhura. " Capitano he say you come to cabin."

" I'll give yon Italian *capitano* ane o' these days," muttered Smith, knocking out his pipe on the palm of his hand. " Aye, aye," he called back, " we'll be there recht awa'. We maun gae like prisoners tae hear their sentence, Mr. Andrew," he said, with a rueful smile, " but the game's no played oot yet awhile."

They found that everything had calmed down in the cabin. Heanan was once more seated at the head of the table, with Gautiez and Dhura on either side. The Frenchman seemed to be quite satisfied with the arrangement they had come to, and greeted the two loyalists with one of his cunning grins which Andrew had learnt to expect when any fresh villainy was afoot.

" We've settled the affair in a friendly way," said Heanan in his usual smooth manner. " Your shares will be set aside until you settle whether to come in or not, and meanwhile we'll go on as before. You three are to obey orders as to working the ship, and are to give us no reason to suspect that you plan to give

us away. When we get to land you'll have the choice given you to come in, or "—the mate paused and glanced at the other two mutineers as he added—" or we'll take steps to see that your mouths will be closed."

" More murder you're meaning ? " said Andrew.

" I haven't mentioned murder," answered Heanan coolly, then added with an echo of the cryptic remark made on two previous occasions, " There's more ways of shutting a person's mouth than by killing him."

" Keeling ze only safe way all ze same," rasped Gautiez, glinting maliciously at Andrew.

Andrew felt more uneasy and bewildered than ever. He determined to put a bold front on his misgivings, and said, with an assumption of coolness he was far from feeling, " You're a gey clever pair of scoundrels, so I'll take it you're both right."

Heanan looked at him sharply as though to read his mind. " You're a regular lawyer, Andrew," he said, " but there are times when the law's about as helpless as—as a boy's brain matched against a man's."

CHAPTER VI

ANDREW GOES ASHORE

NORTHWARD sailed the *Jane*, back to the latitudes of grey sky and ragged cloud which matched her dingy sails and weather-beaten hull.

Tropic seas and skies of blue and gold gave place to pale undertones of opal and pearl, fiery sunsets shot with tongues of livid flame against a background of murky cloud heavy with promise of the wind and rain of the "Roaring Forties"; the gay rhythm of the trade winds had faltered and died, and the oily plain of dead blue-green was broken only by the occasional catspaws of light airs, now filling the idle sails and setting the bows singing the low monotone of motion, now in mocking playfulness setting everything aback while the brig swung idly round the whole circle of the compass.

Then from the west came misty squalls of wind and rain, driving the rail down with sudden gusts until the sea gushed through the scuppers.

At night the far horizon quivered and rumbled ; ever and anon the jagged lightning cleft the mountain of solid cloud piled up on the far rim of the sea, and the sharp metallic staccato of thunder shook the brig from heel to truck.

Northward, ever northward and eastward, until one morning Andrew came on watch at four o'clock to find the westerly wind had met them in good earnest. Rolling up in endless procession from the westward rim came the long grey combers with hissing crests of dirty white, their sides streaked with writhing stripes like marble freshly quarried.

Seagulls screamed in the wake, or with effortless wings outspread swooped down wind to wheel about the bows.

As though she too was born of the sea and flying scud, the little vessel rode the giant waves, exultant to match her fine lines and graceful form against the brute force of Father Neptune.

Save for an occasional scurry of spray which swept down her weather rail like a summer

shower, she rose serene and dry across the tumultuous wilderness of storm-wracked loneliness, her bowsprit ever pointed north and east to the scene of the last act in the drama of which she had been the unwilling and unconscious centre.

Now the long lean hungry greybeards changed to short sharp cross-seas which fought together, or in conspiracy joined forces to leap aboard when least expected and sweep the deck in a flood of swirling frothy green.

Heanan had insisted on teaching Andrew the elements of navigation, and every day at noon, so long as there was any chance of seeing the sun, the two would stand on the little poop, sextants glued to the eye to mark the angle of sun and horizon.

On the chart spread upon the cabin table Andrew learnt to prick out the course, allow for leeway and currents, and mark with a pencilled cross the position of the brig at noon.

With Ireland on the beam the seas decreased ; in the shallow waters of the Irish Sea they became short and sharp and treacherous. For three whole days a fierce gale from the nor'west swept them over towards the English coast, and

only the fine seamanship of Heanan saved them going ashore on the rocks of Cumberland, where the jagged teeth and beetling cliffs would have settled for good and all the fate of men and dollars.

Came softer days and nights with fading winds and soaking mists of fine rain hiding sea and sky and land, until the mate himself confessed he had lost all reckoning of their position.

At times the sullen beating of the surf against the coast, or the cries of seabirds wheeling round their rocky eyries, warned them of land too near.

Still northwards, groping her way now like a blind man along an unknown road, her crew worn with watching, the lead going every half-hour day and night, crept the little ship, impelled by the unseen hand of destiny to her appointed doom.

Andrew had lost count of the days. He felt that he and his companions were doomed like lost souls aboard some Flying Dutchman to grope and wander up and down a fog-bound coast for all eternity.

It was his watch on deck, and turn to keep a look-out right for'ard in the bows. Four bells in the first afternoon watch had gone. All day

a steady mist of fine rain driven by light airs from the westward had wrapped them in a white pall.

As he strained his eyes ahead to pierce the blinding mist, he heard the now familiar flap of canvas taken aback. Looking aloft he saw that the sails were flat against the foremast; the steady ripple of the water at the bow had ceased, and an eerie silence settled about the brig.

A breath of fresh cool wind fanned his cheek, the fine misty rain had cleared, and on the starboard bow a sudden shaft of sunlight rolled back the white film which blotted out the sky.

As though touched by a magic hand the greyness overhead turned to blue, and there before him, not more than a bare half-mile ahead, rose the dark mass of a lofty cliff.

"Land ho! Right ahead!" he hailed.

Aft the voice of Heanan was shouting orders to man the braces. The wind came fresh and cool off the land, which sparkled with silvery radiance of a summer afternoon.

At the foot of the great cliff lay a huddle of grey stone cottages, a little jetty sheltering a few fishing-boats whose masts showed clear above

the broken outline of the jetty against the green of the lower slopes of the steep mountain towering like a protecting wall over the scattered hovels of the little hamlet.

" Let go topgall'nt halyards, clew up mains'l and fores'l. Aloft there, and get that canvas stowed," came the sharp orders of Heanan, who took over the helm from Smith and conned the brig inshore.

Three hundred yards from the tripod beacon at the end of the jetty, the mate brought her into the wind, held her there until she had lost way, and ordered the anchor to be let go.

Already a boat manned by sturdy fishermen was pulling out to them, and as Andrew wondered what Heanan's next move was to be, François came for'ard and told him that the " captain " wished to see him in the cabin.

He found the mate, for he refused to even think of Heanan as the captain, poring over the chart and comparing it with the book of sailing directions for the west coast of Scotland.

" A lucky fluke the sudden change of wind, Andrew," he said as the boy entered the cabin; " it's the island of Barra, as good a place as we could want for our purpose."

Andrew looked at the spot on the chart indicated by Heanan. Had it not been for the sudden change in conditions, the *Jane* would almost certainly have gone ashore, and Barra was isolated enough from any communication with the mainland to prevent news of the brig's arrival reaching the mainland for many days, if not weeks.

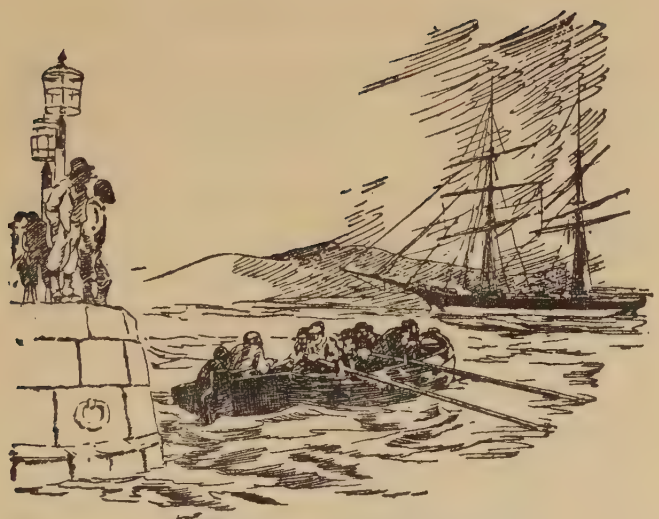
"I must go ashore here," added the mate, "for we must have a boat and fresh meat. I'm wondering whether you'll be willing to give me an extension of your promise to cover our stay here, and come ashore with me?"

"And if I'm no willing, what then?" asked Andrew.

"Then you must stay aboard," answered Heanan.

He sat down in the captain's chair at the head of the table.

"Look here, boy, I want to be frank with you. François for some reason is determined to kill you if he gets the chance. He has good reason to hate you, after all, and I agree with him that if it had not been for you, we should have had no difficulty in persuading the others——"



A boat manned by sturdy fishermen.

" I'm thinking you'd no have got Smith to stand in with you for murder and piracy," said Andrew ; " it's yon Strachan needs a fair dose of stiffening to hold him."

" I'm only telling you what's in the Frenchie's mind," said Heanan impatiently, " and what I'm getting at is this : if I leave you on board here I'm quite sure, and you must be as well, that François will be up to some of his underhand tricks. I can't take him with me, for I'm not fool enough to give you and Smith command of the brig even for an hour or so. I only want you to give me your word to make no sign or

signal of any sort while we are ashore that all is not above board. I, of course, shall say I'm the captain——"

"You're not asking me to tell lies for you?" Andrew burst in angrily.

"That won't be necessary. You'll come with me in your true character as ship's boy, do as you're told, and keep your mouth shut. Either that or you stay here with François in command. If I know the man, he'll provoke you to lose your temper and finish you off."

The mate got up from his chair as if he had no further interest in the matter.

"Well, please yourself," he said carelessly, "only make up your mind at once, for the boat must be almost alongside by this time."

"I'll give you my word for so long as it's only you and myself that's ashore," said Andrew at last.

After all, there was nothing to be gained and perhaps a deal to be lost by staying on board with the Frenchman acting as captain in Heanan's absence. Smith would have François under observation, and he himself would be watching Heanan. It seemed from every point of view an excellent plan. He was young enough, too,

to feel the thrill of going ashore after several weeks at sea and feeling solid ground beneath his feet once more.

A little knot of fishermen with a few women and several unkempt-looking children waited for them on the rough stone jetty.

There were several offers to sell them an open boat when Heanan produced the bag of silver dollars, and he chose a seaworthy-looking twenty-footer with plenty of beam and ample freeboard, with mast and lugsail, for which, after a deal of bargaining, he paid out seventy-five dollars.

Fresh meat, however, was another matter, for these people lived hard lives with but little reward, and fresh meat of any kind was a luxury which seldom came their way.

" It'll be the Macneil of Vatersay wha'll be having what ye want," said the man who had sold the boat, and who was evidently a sort of leader among the fishermen.

" And it's no siller he'll be wantin' and him sae proud and finnicky," added one of the women, a tall, scraggy, red-haired slattern, who eyed the strangers with evident distrust.

Heanan gazed thoughtfully up the narrow

valley which led through a gap in the tall cliffs and, as a small boy shrilly volunteered, to the inland farm of Mr. Macneil.

He took a couple of dollars out of the much-diminished supply he had brought ashore, and held them under the eyes of the urchin.

" If I give you these, do you think you could go up to the Macneil's house and tell him that the captain of the *Jane* would like to send him some wheaten bread, Spanish raisins, a few jars of olives, and would be glad of a sheep and a few fowl ? "

The boy's eyes sparkled eagerly, and it was evident that he would do a good deal to earn the shining coins. He was, however, quite unable to follow the clipped English of the mate, who called upon Andrew to explain what he wanted.

Fortunately the broad lowland which Andrew spoke for the occasion was readily grasped, and having snatched at the dollars, the small boy turned in the direction of the valley and set off at a steady jog-trot.

The offer of another dollar to the vendor of the boat brought the promise of the answer to the message being brought off to the brig;

and having checked the oars and gear of the boat, though there was little need of this, for the islanders, if not hospitable to strangers, seemed more honest than the dwellers in cities, Heanan and Andrew set the mast and hoisted the sail. The mate took the tiller, and the little craft was quickly alongside the brig.

Heanan being uncertain of what answer the laird of Vatersay would send, and unwilling to give up the idea of getting a change of diet, the boat was passed astern ready to return to the jetty if required.

Two hours later one of the fishing-boats was seen to be coming off, and as she came alongside, manned by the swarthy middle-aged man who had sold them the boat, and two lads who seemed to be his sons, it was seen that they brought a sheep, six geese, five ducks, and several pounds of butter.

In return Heanan ordered Smith and Andrew to hand down a jar of sweet oil, two jars of olives, four boxes of raisins, and a large lump of beeswax.

"It's the first time I've handled stolen guids," remarked Smith as they watched the brown-sailed boat returning in the dusk of a

perfect evening to the jetty, " and I'm hoping 'twill be the last."

" You're both doing very well," came the cool tones of Heanan's voice from the poop rail over their heads. " Being very helpful indeed. I'll be able to give you excellent testimonials when we get ashore."

And suddenly there flashed through Andrew's mind the thought that he was weaving about his own head the net which would entangle him and his companions, and would bind them in the eyes of the law to the murderers and mutineers he had vowed to bring to justice.

CHAPTER VII

THE MATE SHOWS HIS HAND

No attempt to get the brig under way was made that night. François, returning in good earnest to his original post in the galley, prepared such a meal as they had not enjoyed for many a long day.

Andrew acted as his assistant, and the rest of the crew, drawn by the appetizing odour of roasting duck, put their heads in from time to time taking long sniffs of the hot fragrant atmosphere, so different from that which usually filled the galley when the fumes of over-ripe salt pork escaped from the great cooking-pot over the stove.

A complete change had come over the Frenchman's attitude towards Andrew, which the boy found more difficult to bear with than the open display of hatred shown by the cook ever since they had sailed from Gibraltar.

Showing his discoloured teeth in what was evidently meant to be an amiable smile, François not only treated him as an equal, but what was still more humiliating to Andrew, as one who was also involved in all that had gone before.

"Vat you do with your dollars, eh, Andrew?" he grinned, as he busied himself with preparing another duck for the oven. "You no go back to your father, I think, eh? You come with François to Glasgow. Plenty good time there."

"I'm no touching your dirty dollars, and fine you ken it," said Andrew.

"Good clean dollars, zose," chuckled the Frenchman. "You no want, eh? All ze more for ze rest. But I think you take zem all ze same—if you get ze chance," and for a moment there flashed into his shifty eyes that look of greed and cruelty which Andrew almost welcomed as being a true part of his character rather than this new friendliness which gave him a feeling of physical nausea.

"We see bymeby. Ze captain he hold council of war after supper to settle everything. You think you clever, eh? Heanan he show you ze truth zis evening all right."

" Good clean dollars, zose," chuckled the Frenchman.

Andrew was glad when the crew having come to the galley for their share of the feast, he carried the smoking meal aft to the cabin, and sat in silence listening to the desultory talk of Heanan and François—an unsavoury enough conversation consisting of scraps of reminiscences of visits ashore in different parts of the world, visits whose limits did not seem to extend beyond the drinking shops and dens of vice along the quaysides.

Having cleared away and washed up the dishes, he was sent by Heanan to summon the rest of the hands aft to the cabin.

The " council of war," then, was to be held, and he hoped with all his heart that something definite was to be settled. The present position was intolerable, and he resolved that come what might he would now finally refuse to give any undertaking not to do all in his power to escape or to give information of the crimes committed by Heanan and the two foreigners. To go on day after day living with these murderers, on the little vessel in which the presence of his captain still seemed to be present, to be obliged to sit at meals with them, to work with them, to hide the fierce anger and bitter grief which still clutched at his heart, was proving too much for him. To-night he would withdraw his parole, and dare them to do their worst.

As on the previous occasion when they were gathered in the cabin, Andrew, Smith, and Strachan drew together and remained standing at the for'ard end of the table at which the three mutineers were seated.

There seemed something ominous in the unusual quiet of that gathering. The *Jane* rode

at anchor without any motion of being at sea. No creaking of timbers or rattle of blocks, not even the ripple of water past the sides, broke the silence with which they waited for Heanan to speak.

" We are getting to the end of our little voyage," the mate began, " and after talking it over with Mr. Gautiez, the mate——" He looked keenly at Andrew and Smith as he deliberately gave the cook his title, as though to challenge a denial.

Andrew said nothing, and Smith, taking his cue from him, remained silent, stolidly keeping his eyes fixed on the lamp over the table.

" After talking it over with Mr. Gautiez, the mate," repeated Heanan, " we have decided that you three are entitled to your share of the dollars, and therefore——"

" See here, you treacherous hounds," interrupted Andrew, stepping forward and looking straight into the mocking eyes of the mate, " there's been more than enough of this play-acting. You can murder us if you like in any of the ways you're so skilled in. I was a fool to give you my promise, but I take it back the now. The first chance I get and I'll inform of you,

you murdering scoundrels. I'm no handling your dirty siller, and I doubt it'll do you much good when kicking your heels in the Tolbooth."

He held out his hands towards François.

"Come on, you cowardly loon," he said hoarsely. "Tie me up before I get my hands round your wizened throat again. You'll no get away sae easy the next time I hold you."

Gautiez sprang to his feet, his hand reaching to his belt for his knife, while Smith took a step forward and stood by Andrew's side.

Heanan laid a pistol on the table in front of him, his thin lips curved in a smile of contemptuous amusement.

"You're too hasty, Andrew, with your offer of martyrdom," he said coldly. "We're here to talk business, and there's been more than enough blood shed already."

He turned to Gautiez and took up the pistol.

"There's only one captain on board this vessel," he snapped viciously, "and that's me. Sit down and put your hands on the table where I can see them."

As the cook sullenly obeyed, he resumed the almost casual conversational tone which Andrew's outbreak had interrupted.

" If you, Andrew, will restrain that violent tongue of yours I will put to you the position as it stands. You can keep your remarks till I've finished, when you'll have a chance to state your side of the case.

" Three weeks ago," he went on, " certain unfortunate events took place on board this brig in which you three took no active part. You, Andrew, talk of murder. Well, I agree you had no share in the necessary bloodshed. But what has been your conduct since then ? You've stood in with us in every way. You've taken your watches on deck, you made no sign that anything was wrong when we hailed the *Lark of Canterbury*, you came ashore with me here and had another chance of telling the truth."

" But I'd given you my word. You ken fine I've always said it was only till we got ashore——"

The mate held up his hand for silence.

" The question, if it comes to the lawyers, will be this : Was any force used to make you hold your tongues ? Will the law—and you're a lawyer's son, Andrew, and a real sea-lawyer yourself—will the law not say that if your promise was made under duress it was not binding, and

that if you were not standing in with us your duty was to have hailed the clipper, or to have blown the gaff yonder ashore ? "

He paused for a moment to allow his words to sink home.

" The judge would say that your silence was due to cowardice or to your wanting to share the dollars. You are all three what the law describes as accessories after the fact, a matter of twenty years' transportation at least. Why, you young fool, you've just finished a meal paid for by stolen goods. You spoke the words which sent that boy up to Vatersay, you helped to rig the boat paid for out of the stolen dollars. And you think that if we fall into the hands of the law you'll be let free ? You're no fool, Andrew. Think it over. You're in with us whether you like it or not."

Andrew stood dumbfounded. Put in this way Heanan's case seemed unanswerable. So this was the meaning of the mate's attitude, his eagerness to teach him navigation ! A deliberately-planned conspiracy more deadly than threats or violence. This, too, the meaning of the cook's sudden change towards him since he had accompanied Heanan ashore.

The mate was right. He had been a fool. A feeling of shame and despair came over him. The manhood he had prided himself on having reached seemed to mock him now. He was once more the child desperately matching his wits against the cunning of a man long experienced in crime and treachery. He had allowed his beloved captain to be murdered before his eyes. He had failed to save his companions, and now he must either allow the criminals to escape or share the punishment they so richly deserved.

"The dollars," he said at last, "you can no say we did aught but refuse to take a share."

"I'm glad you said 'we,'" said Heanan slowly; "that means you stand or fall with each other, I take it?"

"Aye, it's the three of us together," said Andrew, looking fearlessly into the mocking eyes.

"Then it's the last link in the evidence against you," went on the cynical voice, "for Strachan has his share safely stowed away in his chest in the fo'c'sle. He took it over from François yesterday while we were ashore."

Andrew spun round on Strachan, who

cowered away, his face as grey as ashes, guilt written in his downcast eyes and trembling hands.

" It was yon Frenchie forcit me," he muttered. " He said ye wadna come aboard agin, Mr. Andrew, and he stood ower me wi' a knife. I thocht ye were deid and——"

With a roar of rage Peter Smith made a quick step forward. In a flash he had the trembling seaman in his arms, and lifted him like a baby.

A shot rang out at the precise moment when the giant Scot flung his burden straight at the swinging lamp.

The cabin was plunged in darkness as Andrew felt Smith brush past him towards the head of the table. He heard a crash and a string of French oaths as the cook went down beneath the onslaught.

Andrew started forward in the direction he guessed the mate would be sitting, but before he had taken two steps he felt a pair of powerful hands at his throat choking the life out of him.

" If you try to struggle you'll be dead in about two minutes," said the low voice of Heanan in his ears, and he felt himself dragged backwards in the direction of the door.

He had a confused memory of the struggle going on round the table, and had enough sense left in him to be thankful that Smith had the advantage of being sure that anybody he encountered in the dark must be that of an enemy, while François and Dhura were quite likely battering each other.

He was dragged swiftly along the deck, heard the mate fumble at the door of the fo'c'sle hatch, felt himself half-pushed, half-thrown down the ladder, and heard the door slammed and bolted above him.

Sitting there on the deck of the fo'c'sle he tried to piece together the events of the past few minutes. Whether Smith's desperate bid was successful or not, he felt that the situation had demanded an effort to gain control of the brig as the only means of escaping the net weaved for them by Heanan.

He waited in breathless anxiety for the outcome, though the mate's prompt action in carrying him off, and the fact that of all on board the Englishman alone was armed, gave him little hope that the big Scot would be successful single-handed in turning the tables.

Steps came along the deck overhead, the

hatch was flung open, and as he heard the voice of Heanan he realized that his worst fears had been confirmed and that the mate was still master of the situation.

" You've got the strength, Smith, and the pluck," said the hated voice, " but, as I've been trying to show you and the boy for all these weeks, it's always brains that win out in the end."

Andrew got to his feet and stood under the ladder.

" You havena come to the end yet," he cried, trying to control his voice and speak with more assurance than he felt. " It'll be needing more brains than you carry to get you clear of this, Mr. Murderer Heanan."

" Not tamed yet, my young bantam ? " came the mocking voice. " Well, as you say, we haven't come to the end yet." Heanan's tone became crisp. " Now then, Smith, down below with you, or the next shot will get a more vital part than your arm. The boy will bandage your wound, and you'll take your watch as usual to-morrow."

Without so much as troubling to bolt the hatch, he went aft to the cabin.

Smith came slowly down the ladder.

Smith came slowly down the ladder and sank down on his sea-chest.

"A wee bittie bandage fur ma airm, Mr. Andrew," he said cheerfully. "Gosh, bit I gave they foreigners a fair dressing doon."

He chuckled as he cut away the sleeve of his jerkin, showing a clean round wound where Heanan's shot had passed right through his forearm.

" Yon mate's a cunnin' scoondrel. Carrit you off, so he tolt me, and juist walks back into the cuddy wi' a lanthorn and a couple of pistols and marches me for'ard. Ah weel, ma muscle havin' failed, it's your brains we're wantin' agin, Mr. Andrew."

" Och, Peter," groaned Andrew as he tore up a clean shirt for a bandage, " I'm no match for yon loon in cunning. There's only one course left, and we maun follow it. Feign to accept the position, and then take the first chance to get away and inform."

" Aye, it's the only way the noo," said Smith. " Gin we get twenty years' transportation, we'll hae the satisfaction o' knowing they murderers will swing on Leith Sands. If only I'd had the sense tae fling yon puir body Strachan at the mate, we micht hae brocht it off."

PART IV

CHAPTER I

THE SCUTTLING OF THE "JANE"

A DULL grey dawn; the sun rising from banked masses of heavy clouds from which angry flames of crude vermilion showed a sea devoid of warmth or colour.

With her brown lugsail barely filled, an insignificant speck in the vast expanse of heaving water, the boat was heading about south-east. Heavily laden with her burden of six human beings with their sea-chests, a water cask, and two bags of biscuits, the little craft had made but little progress since, some six hours previously, Andrew had pushed off from the side of the *Jane*, and with Heanan at the tiller the boat was headed on a course to bring her to the mainland between the islands of Rum and Skye.

Heanan's intentions had been to round Cape Wrath and the easternmost point of Caithness, and disembark at some unfrequented part of the east coast.

At sunset on the day they left Barra, a fishing-boat had passed them coming from the north, and had hailed them with the news that a revenue cutter was patrolling the Minch.

After a hasty consultation with François, the mate had changed his plans. The boat which he had bought at Barra was hauled up alongside, and preparations were at once made for abandoning the brig ; the sea-chests were stowed for'ard, a twelve-gallon cask of fresh water filled and lashed against the after thwart, biscuits, a compass and sextant placed aft, and the boat passed astern again.

The mate had made no reference to the events of the previous evening, and though an atmosphere of tension lay heavily over the ship's company, and François and Dhura bore evident signs of the power of Peter Smith's fists, two pistols ostentatiously thrust through Heanan's belt, and the work of getting under way followed by the preparing of the boat, made all hands too busy to brood over the scuffle in the cabin.

The mate had announced his intention of reaching the mainland in the vicinity of Arisaig, where they were to separate, making their own way south, with a tale of being the survivors

of the brig *Betsy* of New York, carrying cotton and tobacco, which had gone ashore off Barra Head.

Heanan and the two foreigners had stowed their share of the dollars in their chests, and the mate had announced that he himself would take charge of the bags which had been ostensibly set aside for Andrew and Smith.

"You'll maybe have them stowed away all right in your chest when you start your journey south," he said to Andrew. "It would be a fine thing to arrive at Glasgow or Edinburgh with a fat bag of silver dollars."

Andrew realized the uselessness of further argument over the money, and turned away without speaking. He had agreed with Smith that they should keep together, and, on getting ashore, make for the nearest township, where they would tell the whole story to the revenue officers.

Andrew had been wakened by Dhura shortly before eight bells midnight, and had come on deck to find the boat alongside and the crew gathered in the waist.

The mate gave orders to go aloft to take in topgallant sails. The topsails were also stowed

and the courses clewed up ; the spanker and jibs were left flying.

Under François' directions the hatch cover was removed, and the cook, accompanied by Dhura and Strachan, went below.

Smith was at the wheel, for the night being calm with a light breeze, the brig could be steered with one hand, and Andrew and the mate were left alone by the rope ladder which hung over-side to the boat, which was gently nosing the side.

" Get down into the boat, boy, and keep her off the side. It's good-bye to the *Jane* for you to-night, and we ought to make Cape Arisaig to-morrow afternoon."

" You're no leaving the brig adrift ? " said Andrew in surprise, as he swung a leg over the gunwale and felt for the top rung of the ladder.

" She'll not drift long," answered Heanan ; " they're boring holes in her below the water line, and by sunrise she'll be where she'll tell no tales."

Andrew felt a sudden flame of anger, and though he had vowed to himself to keep a guard over his tongue, the thought that the gallant little brig which he had first seen that April

day two months ago beating up the Forth was to be calmly left to sink proved too much for his self-control.

"A fine end to your list of murders," he said in a choking voice. "I've aye heard tell a sailor loves his ship too well to leave her till she's sinking under his feet. But you never were her captain, and she's no more to you than a useless hulk."

Heanan caught his wrist, which was resting on the gunwale, in his iron grip.

"You'll go too far before you've finished, boy," he said, and his voice was vibrant with an emotion Andrew had never heard before. "What do *you* know of a sailor's feeling? Life has treated me too bad for me to care for anything but rewarding myself as I may, but I tell you that the holes they are boring there below are like wounds in my own flesh."

He loosed the grip of Andrew's wrist, and in the dim light of the lanthorn the boy could have sworn there were tears in his eyes.

"I've sailed in the *Jane* for nigh three years now, Andrew, and I know her every mood. She's as sweet a little sea boat as you could find, and a fine lady, too, from heel to truck. But am

I such a fool as to leave her to drift and tell the story to all the world? Can I sail her into port and say, 'Here is the brig *Jane* with a murderer and a pirate in command, and gallons and gallons of silver dollars on board which we have looted'?"

His voice took on a sterner tone with something of its old sinister hardness.

"I've done many things the last few weeks as black as the pit, but there's none I shall regret so much as this scuttling of a fine little ship. Down into the boat there, boy," he suddenly broke off, "do you want her to stave her side in?"

Andrew, bewildered by this new revelation of character, clambered into the boat, and taking the boathook fended her off the side of the brig.

For a wild moment he thought of allowing the boat to drift aft, calling Smith to make a jump for it as she came under the stern, but he put it aside as folly. The mate was at the head of the ladder armed with pistols, and Smith was wounded. There was Strachan too, who, weak as he had showed himself in the end, had been loyal to his captain and owners until the day before. He must stand by and wait on events

as already planned, and at least see that the criminals were brought to justice.

He heard Heanan call Smith to leave the wheel. Figures appeared at the top of the ladder and climbed into the boat. Heanan came last and went to the tiller, giving orders to hoist the sail.

"Let go for'ard," he said, and with a last pat on the smooth side of the dainty little vessel, as though bidding her a last good-bye, Andrew pushed the boat clear.

She drifted astern, the sail flapping in the lee of the brig; then, as she came clear, filled and heeled lightly over to the breeze, leaving the *Jane* on the port beam.

The slender spars outlined against the starlit sky and the dark shadow of her shapely hull faded into the night. No word was said; the silence was broken only by the ripple of the water past the side and the light creaking of the tiller from the stern, where the mate, a dim figure with bowed head, leant over the compass, setting the little craft on her course to the mainland.

Daylight fulfilled the promise of the sullen dawning. Heavy clouds raced up from the

south-east, bringing a driving rain and a wind that steadily increased in weight as the forenoon crept on.

In spite of the sail being closely reefed the boat was making heavy weather of it, and all hands were kept busy bailing.

A meal of biscuits washed down by a pannikin of water at eight bells did little to cheer them up, and a deep gloom settled down on them as the afternoon wore away and no land came in sight.

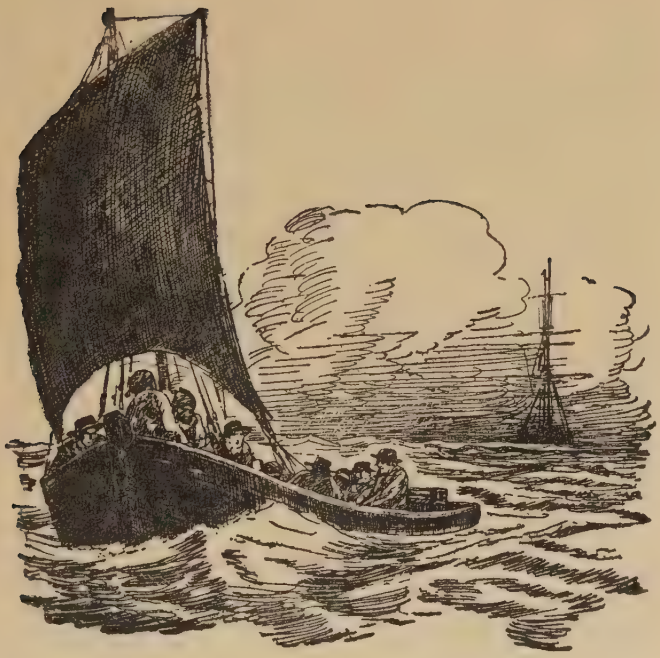
At dusk the wind was blowing a gale from the south-east dead ahead, and Heanan declared that they could no longer face it.

Going about was a risky operation with such a high sea running, and they were nearly swamped before the mate had her before the wind and running nor'west to clear Skye.

Heanan was unwilling to trust either of the foreigners at the tiller under such conditions, and Strachan having done his two hours, Smith took his turn, with Andrew beside him to supply the lack of his wounded arm.

For the next two hours Andrew sat crouched up in the stern, one hand on the tiller following Smith's directions.

It was strenuous work and dangerous too,



No word was said.

for the boat was none too well trimmed for running, and the big following seas threatened to overwhelm them if the boat was allowed to yaw.

Summer though it was, the night was bitterly cold ; the driving spray and occasional heavy squalls of rain had long since soaked everybody to the skin.

Dawn showed them a wild smother of surf

breaking against granite cliffs which stretched away to starboard as far as the eye could reach. The wind had dropped, but the sea ran as high as ever, and there seemed little hope of any improvement in the weather.

"That'll be the coast of Skye," said Heanan, as he relieved Andrew and Smith at the tiller. "We'll keep it abeam to round Hunish Head and find shelter in Loch Pooltiel for the night. Shake a reef out, for'ard there ; we'll get another knot or two out of her."

François and Dhura were showing up badly under the stress of circumstances, while Strachan, a good seaman, and accustomed from boyhood to the management of small boats, was proving himself a better man than they. Andrew set his teeth and made up his mind to show no sign of faltering. Chilled to the bone, sick at heart, and beginning to despair of ever reaching land, he managed to keep cheerful and active. He lent Strachan a hand in shaking out the reef, and stretched himself on the sodden bottom-boards alongside Smith to try and get a short sleep.

All day they ran along the wild coast of Skye, and at sunset were heading due north. With

the wind on the quarter the little craft was riding more easily than she had done with the sea running dead aft.

"It will have to be the Western Islands after all," said Heanan at last. "That should be Ascrib Point right abeam now, and if we hold on we ought to be off Stornoway by this time to-morrow."

"What for you no puta boata ashore now?" demanded Dhura, sitting up in the bottom of the boat, his teeth chattering and his lips blue with cold.

"Because I want to save my skin and yours, you yellow-livered skunk," said the mate. "We'd last about half a minute after hitting the shore anywhere along this coast."

"You say we find shelter in Loch Pooltiel, eh? You change opinion too much," came the voice of François from the for'ard thwart.

"I'll change it just so often as it seems best to me," snapped back the mate. "We'll land somewhere within reach of Stornoway and stick to the story of the *Betsy* of New York. It would be sheer madness to try and weather Hunish Head and beat into the Sound by night."

Night fell after a long sullen twilight of

murky gloom with the song of the storm rising again to a fierce crescendo. The reef was taken in, and all hands settled down to another night of misery and discomfort.

The only gleam of consolation was that the June nights were short in these northern latitudes, and indeed had it been winter it is doubtful whether they could have survived the long hours of exposure. Heanan, to give the man his due, showed no sign of weakness or anxiety, and did his best to cheer the drooping spirits of François and Dhura by the promise of getting ashore early the next day.

CHAPTER II

THROUGH THE BREAKERS

TOWARDS dawn the force of the gale had spent itself, though a strong tide running against the heavy sea still made it necessary to exercise the utmost care to keep the boat from broaching-to.

Daylight showed them the loom of land on the port beam, and Heanan paid off the helm to bring it on the bow.

As they approached the rugged cliffs and jagged reefs over which the great seas were breaking, flinging up clouds of white spray, there seemed little hope of discovering a landing.

All the forenoon they ran north at a distance of about two miles from the shore, keeping a sharp look-out for a break in the cliffs. At times the land ran sharply away as they passed the great entrances to the long lochs which cut their way into the island of Lewis.

François and Dhura demanded that the mate

should run into one of these openings, but Strachan, who knew the coast, insisted that there was a possible landing at Swordale, where the Eye Peninsula runs sheer out from the land, to which it is joined by a narrow causeway.

As far as could be judged from the position of the sun, which from time to time showed through the ragged masses of cloud, it was past midday when Andrew, standing in the bows of the boat, reported land right ahead.

On the course they were making Strachan reckoned they were heading for Stornoway Harbour, and Heanan brought the boat up, and made for the tall cliffs now some five miles off on the starboard bow.

As they approached, Strachan took Andrew's place in the bows and acted as pilot.

" Aye, yon's Chicken Head a' recht," he said, as the outline of the cliffs became clear. " A wee bittie to port, sir, and steer for yon break on the port bow."

Heanan stood up in the stern-sheets to get a clearer view.

" If that's the best landing we can find, it's going to be touch-and-go," he said grimly. " Are you sure there's a beach there, Strachan?"

" There's wee bit shingle, juist whaur ye see yon track doon the cliff," answered the seaman, " but I'm no saying we shall beach her withoot hitting one o' they muckle boulders."

" Keep a sharp look-out then. You, Smith, go for'ard and help con her in."

The sea was running with all its wild fury, crashing in a mass of broken water at the base of the lofty cliffs. Already the thunder of the surf sounded in their ears with a threatening, never-ceasing roar.

Now they could see a narrow strip of grey shingle, up which the breakers poured their great cataracts of broken water. It seemed impossible that any boat could make a landing, but they were among the outlying reefs by this time, too late to think of turning back.

The two Scots in the bow shouted directions, and Heanan, his thin lips set in a straight line, his eyes fixed in concentration on the work in hand, skilfully guided the little craft between the treacherous rocks on either side, which showed their jagged fangs amid a smother of foam as they were borne past on the crest of the great rollers.

The roar of the breakers now made it im-

possible to hear the voices from the bows. Heanan stood upright, and the two sailors gave directions by motions of their arms.

" Stand by to jump over the side and drag her up ! " the mate roared, as the beach seemed to rush forward to meet them.

A swirling mass of broken water sucked them back, showing the writhing expanse of shingle, in which every pebble seemed alive as it ground itself amid its million fellows.

Dark and menacing, solid points among the moving shingle, showed the great boulders which, broken away from the cliff overhead, had plunged down to bury themselves in the stones beneath.

Astern a mountain of water reared its towering head, its hissing white-capped summit outlined against the grey background of wind-torn cloud.

Pulled backwards by the undertow, the boat resisted the onward sweep and buried her stern in the wall of solid green that swept towards the beach as though to threaten the towering cliff beyond.

The mate's cry of warning was drowned in the roar of the breaker, as with exulting fury

it overwhelmed the frail work of man which dared to bar its way.

With hands and feet dug into the yielding shingle beneath them, dazed and breathless they struggled amidst the backwash of the great wave which had smashed the boat to splinters and flung the fragments high on the beach.

One by one as the swirling water released its clutching tentacles which threatened to drag them back into the boiling surf, they crawled above high-water mark and flung themselves down on the stones to regain their breath.

Bruised and shaken as they were, Heanan drove them to the work of salving their chests ; the rest of the boat's gear, with the shattered timbers, lay in confusion along the narrow strip of beach, or was tossed about on the outer edge of surf.

The chests were collected and placed under the cliff, where the whole party gathered together, seeking what shelter they could find under a ledge of rock.

Andrew had noticed that Heanan kept close to his side while they were dragging the sea-chests out of the sea, and when the work was

done and they sat down to rest, the mate seated himself by his side.

" Does your promise hold good here, lad ? " he said in a low voice.

" It was to hold good the whiles we were ashore at Barra," answered Andrew as coolly as he could.

" Does that mean you'll give us away as soon as you get a chance ? "

Andrew thought hard for a moment, wondering whether he could hold him off and gain more precious time.

" You've got to decide, boy," said Heanan, as though he guessed what was passing through his mind. " You know what the choice is."

Andrew remained silent, wondering whether Smith would notice what was going on, and be ready to help him if it came to the worst.

" There's not a chance of escape," added Heanan. " I've a pistol here, and if you make any attempt to move I shan't hesitate to use it."

" A pistol would no be much use after the ducking it's had," said Andrew, still thinking hard.

" There's a knife, if that fails, and you've had

a taste of what I can do with my hands." Then raising his voice, he called, " Gautiez, come here a moment."

At that moment the sound of horses' hoofs on the shingle and the jangle of bits came from the direction of the path, which was out of sight from where they sat.

Four horsemen rounded the cliff and drew up a few feet away from where they were seated. A short thickset man with keen grey eyes, dressed in the uniform of a custom-house officer, dismounted, and throwing the reins to a young man who, from the resemblance to the officer, was evidently his son, stepped forward and addressed himself to Heanan, who had also advanced to meet the newcomers.

" Well ? " he said, in a quiet voice of authority. " How came you here ? Who are you ? "

Heanan saluted respectfully. " Captain and crew of the brig *Betsy*, sir," he said glibly. " Heavy gales all the way across. We sprung a leak off Islay, and our boat was driven north by the heavy weather."

He cast a glance along the little beach littered with the wreckage.

" We tried to beach her an hour ago, with the

result you see. We must reckon ourselves lucky to get ashore at all."

The officer's gaze travelled over the little group. There could be no doubt but that they were shipwrecked sailors, and he had no reason to question the simple story outlined by the well-spoken man who claimed to be the captain of the *Betsy*.

"Your first need, then, is warmth and food," he said cheerfully. "You'll find both at Swordale."

He took the reins of his horse from the man who was holding them, and swung himself into the saddle.

"If you'll see to getting your gear to the top of the cliff, I'll send along to Swordale and ask them to send a cart. To-morrow you will come into Stornoway and make your declaration."

He looked once more around the little cove and the ragged group of sailors. For a moment it seemed as though he was going to put further questions. Then with a slight shrug of his broad shoulders he wheeled his horse, and the party moved away over the shingle in the direction they had come.

The party moved away over the shingle.

Heanan chuckled quietly as they disappeared from view around a ledge of cliff. " By this time to-morrow we shall be the heroes of the island. There's always a romantic air about poor shipwrecked mariners, isn't there, Andrew ? "

Andrew made no reply. His mind was busy on a problem which involved several factors. There was the distance to the corner of rock round which the horsemen had gone ; whether his light weight would be a help or a handicap in a race over the loose shingle ; since Heanan's pistol was useless, would the mate be able to use his knife before he could get a fair start ? What action would Peter Smith take to aid him ?

Would the two foreigners offer any obstacle to his getting clear away ?

As Andrew hesitated, the mate made up his mind for him.

" Another chance gone, boy," he bantered. " It'll be against you that you didn't deny my story at once."

Andrew shifted his weight on to his right leg, digging his toe into the shingle to get a good start. It came back to him how he used to race against his schoolfellows on the sands at Leith, and the pride he felt at giving bigger boys than himself a start. He felt stiff and was weak from lack of food or sleep, and the loose stones of the beach were very different from the hard sand on which he used to run. The mate was active and quick in mind and body, but if only he could keep ahead until they came in sight of the party ahead the race would be as good as won.

The horsemen should be on the cliff path by this time, and, as they zigzagged up the narrow track alongside the little stream, would doubtless from time to time look down on the beach below.

He felt again that queer feeling of tension which used to come to him as he waited the starter's signal.

The mate had turned away, and was rousing the two foreigners, who had sunk back listlessly on the shingle, to get to work in carrying the sea-chests to the foot of the path.

" Watch him, Peter ! " called Andrew in his high clear voice, and with fists clenched close to his sides he started forward.

He heard a shout behind him, the sound of feet scuffling among the loose stones.

With long light strides he sprang over the treacherous shingle. The going was worse than he had anticipated, and he had to change step from time to time to avoid falling over the boulders with which the cove was strewn.

A stone whizzed by his head, then he heard the crunching of steps behind him.

He was tempted to look back, but was too experienced a runner not to know that many a race had been lost by the leader who looked over his shoulder. Moreover, he dare not take his eyes from the ground a few yards in front as he dodged the boulders.

He came abreast of the cliff corner, and the twisting path leading upwards to the summit was in view. Away at the top the last horseman was disappearing over the summit, and with a

sinking heart he realized that he must keep ahead all the way up the rough track, and along the unseen road beyond.

Behind him he heard the clatter of the pursuing steps, which seemed to him to be coming closer.

He was among the broken boulders now which lay at the foot of the cliff, and the sound of the burbling stream deadened the sound of the steps behind him.

More care was needed here, for a stumble might be fatal, and it would be easy to fall and twist an ankle among the scattered fragments of rock.

His feet met the hard, worn soil of the path. He shortened his step to keep all his strength for the steep ascent which lay before him.

It was here that he got his second wind. Back there over the last twenty yards of the shingle his lungs had seemed about to burst and his breath had come in sobbing gasps. He breathed more easily now, and he became aware of a weakness in his knees.

As he sprang up the first length of twisting track he heard a hoarse, breathless shout behind him. A moment later a small stone flew over

his head. Another hit him in the small of his back.

" It'll be a bigger one next time," he thought grimly to himself, and he lengthened out his stride, hoping to get out of range.

He was half-way up now, but the footsteps had again become audible. They seemed to be drawing closer, and he fancied he could hear the heavy breathing of his pursuer.

His breath was going again, and a sharp, stabbing pain in his right side warned him that he was nearly at the end of his strength.

The path twisted sharp to the right ; beyond the bend it led straight to the top ; the slope was more gradual here, and he gathered together all his resources for a final effort. If beyond the summit he was to find a long stretch of empty road, he knew that he must fail, for he felt his legs tottering, and the pain was all round his heart.

The last few yards of the path had been cut out between two banks of grass, and sloped gently downwards to the narrow lane beyond.

He emerged into the lane and suddenly found himself in the midst of the group of horsemen. The tall man who had spoken to Heanan seemed

to be giving directions, and two others were dismounting to give their horses over to a third.

The picture before him became blurred and indistinct; the muddy lane with deep cart tracks and dark puddles seemed to rise to meet him.

He heard a voice a great way off saying, "Hallo! what have we here? Gad, if it isn't the youngster from the beach."

Heavy footsteps clattered down the slope to the lane, and there came a sharp word of command.

"Halt, you there!"

Then, strangest of all, a well-remembered voice, choking for breath, but still with something of the steady resonance which had helped him to stand up to life during the past month.

"I juist cam' along to tell Mr. Andrew ah've gi'en yon mate sic' a clip under the jaw, back there on the beach, that he'll no wake up for a wee bittie."

Andrew roused himself and sat up, leaning on his elbow. "Peter!" he gasped. "It was you I was running away from!"

Smith, his great chest shaken by his sobbing breath, made an effort to smile.

" Aye, it was mysel'. Yon Frenchie heaved a rock at me which nigh got you as I cam' awa', and I hadna the breath left to call oot tae ye."

" So that was why you threw yon pebble? And I had all that race for nothing."

" Ye're a gey fine runner, Mr. Andrew, though I doot if I had twa airms to help me I'd hae caught ye half-way up."

" And now," interposed a calm voice, " perhaps you'll keep the little breath you've got left to tell me all about it."

CHAPTER III

THE NEWS COMES TO LEITH

THE same day that the *Jane* sailed from the Forth, Mr. Camelier had dispatched a messenger post-haste to Plymouth in the faint hope that Captain Johnson might put in there for fresh provisions. He also sent urgent letters overland to Gibraltar, with instructions to the captain to refuse to handle the dollars and to return to Leith at once, and to Sylva, stating that if any difficulty was raised on his side to this course, the matter would be referred to the British Governor of the Rock, who would doubtless take action in the matter as an infringement of the laws of neutrality.

Posts were slow and irregular, however, and letters travelling by road through Spain were by no means certain of delivery, so poor was the organization of the post and so unsettled the state of the interior.

The weeks dragged by in the gloomy house in Kirk Street, and though both husband and wife did their best to hide their feelings from each other, the strain of waiting became well-nigh insupportable.

Jessie and Robert came very close together in those days of spring and early summer. Both felt themselves to be in some measure responsible for the empty place in the household, and in the determination to avoid mutual reproach a new tenderness and trust grew up between them.

The early days of June were wild and wet that year, and the shrill note of the sudden gales howling over the roofs of Leith did little to comfort Mistress Camelier as she thought of her son on board the frail little brig sailing the wide seas.

" It's no the weather ye've to fear, lass," said her husband one afternoon when he had found her in Andrew's attic at the top of the house, gazing out through her boy's " charmed magic casement " at the narrow strip of storm-tossed water between the grey slates and blackened chimney-pots.

" The *Jane* will be sailing in fine weather

latitudes all the time, he'll be so brown and bonnie and grown you won't recognize him," he added, forcing into his voice a note of light confidence which he was far from feeling.

She turned to him, and smiling bravely in her turn, said—

" He'll find it sair hard to settle down at school again, Robert, after the free life he's having with Captain Johnson."

" We'll be living in Edinburgh by then if the partnership with old Mr. Gaff of Queen Street can be arranged, and he'll be ready and willing to go to the High School if he can come home the evenings to his mother."

" And to his father, Robert," she answered, slipping her hand into his, " for you're going to be great friends, the two of you."

" Aye, the bairn 'll have twa doddering parents to spoil him when he gets back."

They smiled at each other, with a weight on their hearts, and a prayer for their only child, thrown by their wayward pride among perils greater than they themselves yet realized.

" Whatever comes, Robert, he'll be brave and gay. The one thing certain is that he'll no follow what he kens is not straight."

Two days later the coasting schooner *Highland Lass* sailed into Leith Harbour with news which sent a flutter of excitement round the quayside, and a messenger in hot haste to Mr. Camelier at his house in Kirk Street.

The messenger, one of the hands from the *Highland Lass*, told his story standing where Captain Johnson had stood two months before with Andrew by his side.

Mistress Camelier was in the office with her husband when the man burst in, conducted by little David MacIlwain, the harbourmaster's son, and Mr. Camelier, certain that he was the bearer of ill-news, stood up and gently urged his wife to take the big chair at the table. He himself remained standing, one hand resting lightly on Jessie's shoulder.

A meagre tale enough, more heartrending to the listeners from its very lack of detail, was the story brought to Leith that morning.

An hour before the *Highland Lass* left Stornoway ten days ago, had come the news that a brig had gone ashore at Tolsta Head some fifteen miles north of the town. The fishermen had made an attempt to board her before she went ashore, for she had been abandoned, and was

drifting before the wind. They had been obliged to abandon the attempt owing to her water-logged condition, the decks being awash and the vessel like to founder at any moment.

On her stern was the name, *Jane*, Gibraltar. The abandonment they thought must have been deliberate, for the topgallant sails and topsails were furled, courses clewed up, with only the flying jib and spanker set. There were no boats on board, and as far as could be seen everything was shipshape on deck. She had gone ashore a hundred yards from the cliffs during the night, and at dawn the fishing-boats were clustered round her, anxious to salve the cargo before she went to pieces under the heavy pounding from the heavy seas.

There was no news of any of her crew, and the weather had been heavy from the south-east for three days previous.

It was obviously useless to question the man, for he knew no more than he had stated.

Mistress Camelier sat there as though turned to stone, while Robert went with the man to the front door and watched him go down the street, the small urchin trotting by his side full of self-importance over his share in all the excitement

A meagre tale enough.

about the wreck of the vessel he remembered having seen moored to the quay some two months previously.

The lawyer returned to the office anxious and bewildered, though determined to put a brave face on things before his wife.

She looked up at him with a white, troubled face as he came in and shut the door behind him.

" What does it mean, Robert ? Can we no get more news from the captain of the schooner ? "

" It's maybe good news in strange guise, lass," answered her husband. " The letter must have reached Captain Johnson, and he was homeward bound round the north coast. Heavy weather, and maybe she sprung a leak."

" If she could float long enough to drift ashore, he'd no have abandoned her like that," said Mistress Camelier, seeing the weak spot in the hopeful words.

" I'm no sailor enough to say as to that," said Robert ; " but the boats were got away, it seems, and Captain Johnson wouldna take to the boats unless he thought they could reach land."

He came over to the table, and sitting on the edge, took both her hands in his.

" Why, lass, they may well have landed on the mainland, and the boy will be home at any time the now."

She looked up at him and smiled through her tears.

" Do you feel that really, Robert, or is it just to comfort me ? We've been brave so far, and

we'll know for certain very soon. It's sair work this waiting, but I'll no believe the boy has come to any harm."

Nor was the waiting to be long, for as they spoke the revenue cutter, *Princess Royal*, Captain Cunningham, was thrashing her way along the east coast, having on board the six survivors of the *Jane*.

Though it was uncertain how far the guilt for the crime of murder and piracy was shared among them, Mr. Maciver, the customs officer, had used his influence to persuade the captain to keep Andrew and Smith separate from the rest of the prisoners, and they were placed in the forepeak, while Heanan and the three others were in the hold.

Each forenoon for the past four days Mr. Camelier had gone down to the harbour in quest of further news of the *Jane*, and on the morning of the 30th of June he was about to return to the house, having ascertained that no vessel had come in during the night, when he changed his mind, and walking to the end of the jetty, stood looking out over the Firth.

It was a bright warm morning with the sky washed clear of cloud, and a brisk breeze from

the sea driving the water up towards Queensferry with the flowing tide.

The brown sails of the fishing-boats were scattered over the wide waters, and from down the Firth the white sails of a cutter showed up sharp and clear against the morning sky.

She was coming up swiftly with the following wind and tide, and in the vague hope that she might bring news of the crew of the *Jane* he idly watched her coming nearer.

As she neared the harbour he recognized her as the *Princess Royal*, a revenue cutter, whose headquarters were at Leith, and whose captain was a friend who had often supped with him at Kirk Street.

He recalled now that the skipper of the *Highland Lass*, on being questioned, had mentioned passing a revenue cutter a few hours out of Stornoway, and now something told him that the solution of the mystery of his brig was coming to him on the wings of the graceful vessel already shortening sail to make the harbour.

As soon as the cutter was moored, Mr. Camelier went to the gangway and sent a message to the captain, requesting an interview.

The sailor returned and asked him to follow him to the captain's cabin, where he found his friend, Captain Cunningham, who rose from his chair to greet him.

" This is a bad business, Mr. Camelier," he said, with deep feeling. " I had no idea that you were a shipowner, still less that your boy was aboard the *Jane*."

For a moment the lawyer felt as though his heart had stopped beating.

" What do you mean, captain ? " he asked. " Where is my boy ? Has anything happened to him ? "

" Your son is here on board, a prisoner with the mate and four of the crew."

" A prisoner ? On what charge ? " asked the lawyer, his face going deathly white. " There must be some mistake. What is he —what are they charged with ? "

" Mr. Camelier, believe me, I am more sorry than I can say to be the bearer of such news. I know very little about the affair, though I am given to understand that your boy and a man named Peter Smith are likely to be acquitted on the major charge."

" The major charge ? " echoed Mr. Camelier.

" Come, captain, you must tell me frankly what it is all about, for I know no more than that the *Jane* went ashore off Tolsta Head after being abandoned. What are the charges, and where is the master, Captain Johnson ? "

" The charges are—remember your boy seems to be cleared beforehand of the worst—murder and piracy on the high seas."

Mr. Camelier sunk down on the settee which ran along the port side of the captain's cabin and covered his face with his hands.

In a troubled voice, for he was himself a father and could judge what the lawyer must be feeling, Captain Cunningham told him the outline of the story as it had been related to him by Mr. Maciver at Stornoway.

" The mate, who seems a well-educated rascal, owned up as soon as the Macivers went back to the cove and made the arrest. He knew his game was up, of course, when your boy Andrew and the seaman Smith got away and followed the party of excisemen up the cliff path."

" There's something mysterious about the part your son played in the affair," went on the captain, pouring out two glasses of Madeira wine and handing one to Mr. Camelier, " and

young Maciver, who came aboard with the prisoners, told me that his father was inclined to believe at first that the lad had been forced into joining the others after the murders were committed. The trouble, however, was that, in spite of your youngster's story that both he and Smith had refused to touch the money, a bag of dollars was found in his sea-chest."

Robert Camelier raised his head and looked at his host, an angry flush on his cheek.

" A transparent enough trick," he said, " and an obvious one on the part of the mate, who, as you say, is a clever scoundrel."

He rose from his seat and came across to the captain.

" Captain Cunningham, I'm a lawyer, as ye ken, and I know I've no right to ask it, but will ye let me see my boy? It's more than two months since he left without my knowledge or consent, and it would be a comfort to his mother if I could tell her I'd seen him."

The captain stood up and offered the lawyer his hand.

" Mr. Camelier," he said, " I'm no lawyer myself, and know little of the finicky laws that govern my position as temporary gaoler, except

that I am responsible for handing over the prisoners to the authorities here. It will be no risk to let him see you. Stay here and I'll send him to you, but I will give you no more than a quarter of an hour."

Andrew entered the cabin a few moments later. He was very pale and worn, with his clothes in tatters. But he held his head high and met his father's eyes with the old look of quiet defiance, as though he expected reproach and anger.

The look broke down his father's last barrier of reserve.

He stepped across the little cabin and held out his arms.

" Andrew," he said, his voice trembling with emotion, " my son, thank God ye've come hame again."

Andrew, feeling at last that he could remove the restraint imposed upon him during the past fortnight, during which he had fought so hard to keep a stiff lip and not give way, broke down.

" Father, father," he sobbed, as he felt Robert's arms about him, " ye don't believe

I've done anything wrong? I tried sae hard to save the captain and bring back the brig. Ye'll make them believe me, father, for if they bring me in guilty it will break mother's heart."

"There, there, laddie," murmured the lawyer, "we both ken fine you've had no share in villainy. Sit ye here and tell me all about it. We'll get the cleverest advocate in all Edinburgh for your defence, and we'll have ye hame again before mony weeks are past."

Sitting there in the captain's cabin, with the noise of footsteps overhead and the growing murmur of voices from the crowd gathered on the quayside eagerly discussing the fresh development and awaiting the landing of the prisoners, Andrew told the story of the voyage of the *Jane*, a tale which his father must presently repeat to Mistress Camelier up yonder in the house in Kirk Street.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADMIRALTY COURT

THE Scottish High Court of Admiralty was in session at Edinburgh, and an atmosphere of tense expectancy filled the crowded court on the third day of the trial for mutiny, murder, and piracy on the high seas of the mate and crew of the brig *Jane*.

All the elements of drama were staged in that high-ceilinged room, whose dusty walls and smoke-grimed windows, had they but possessed the faculty of speech, could have told so many stirring tales of the romance and tragedy of the sea. Two of the prisoners, the English mate and the French cook, were arraigned on the three charges, an Italian seaman had turned king's evidence, while the cabin-boy, son of the part-owner of the brig, Mr. Camelier of Leith, with two Scottish seamen were charged only with complicity in acts of piracy.

Formal evidence of the arrest, identification of the prisoners, and the finding of bags of silver dollars in the sea-chests of the whole party had been given by the six witnesses from Lewis, and had served to whet the appetites of the onlookers for the account of the events which had preceded the arrival of the boat at Chicken Cove and the stranding of the brig off Tolsta Head.

The second day was taken up with the evidence and cross-examination of Dhura the Italian. Excitement had grown as it became clear that not only had the murders been deliberately planned and carried out with cold-blooded callousness, but that, if the testimony of the Italian was true, Andrew Camelier, who, on account of his extreme youth, his gallant bearing, and his local connection, was the centre of much sympathetic interest, would receive a heavy sentence as being involved in various acts of piracy.

In the public gallery Jessie Camelier sat with old Mistress Camelier, Robert's mother. The old lady had shown her true colours in those weeks before the trial, and Jessie had learned that underneath a harsh and almost

forbidding exterior there beat a heart of sympathy and fierce loyalty to her own kith and kin which had helped to sustain the anxious parents through this time of aching anxiety.

In the body of the court Mr. Camelier sat at the solicitors' table. In spite of the searching cross-examination of the witnesses by Mr. Webber, the brilliant young advocate whom he had retained for Andrew's defence, the scales seemed to be tipped too heavily against them. Over the tale as told by Dhura hung the shadow of Heanan. Though the Italian's evidence exposed the cold ferocity of the mate and sealed the doom of his two fellow-criminals, the story was twisted at vital points to show that Andrew shared the guilt in the events which followed the murders.

Fear of the mate, hatred of Andrew, the wish to see all the others involved in guilt, what was the motive for these obvious falsehoods, thought the lawyer, The broken English, the excited gestures, were the Italian's, but the perversions as to Andrew's part were most assuredly Heanan's.

Unless Advocate Webber could shake the testimony in cross-examination, it seemed too

certain that his son would be found guilty, and receive a heavy sentence. At a time when mere boys were sentenced to death for petty theft, it was even possible—— Robert Camelier closed his eyes as though to shut out the vision of the stark gibbets with their ghastly burdens on Leith Sands. He looked up to where his wife and mother were seated, and forced himself to smile and slightly shrug his shoulders as though the story as told by Dhura was too palpably false to take seriously, and then at Andrew, who stood there in the dock with the others, his eyes fixed in horrified incredulity on the Italian, who, parrot-like, repeated the tale as taught by Heanan.

Truth blended so well with falsehood; the foreigner's candid story of the plot and murders seemed to form a coherent whole with the acquiescence of Andrew and the two Scots after the incident of letting smoke into the fo'c'sle. Their surrender was made to appear natural and unconditional, their readiness in accepting a share of the plunder and to help to sail the brig a very human acceptance of the inevitable, mingled with common avarice of mankind to gain wealth with as little effort as possible.

That Strachan had, in fact, accepted his share made the guilt of the other two more credible, and Mr. Camelier knew well that when Andrew gave evidence later on he was too guileless and truthful to attempt to deny the weakness of Strachan.

Could Mr. Webber find a weak spot in Dhura's evidence? Robert glanced at the advocate, who had risen to cross-examine with his usual air of supreme confidence, which never varied, however hard the fight might appear to be going against him.

"You said, I think, that the firing of the shot by Gautiez in the cabin was the signal for you to secure the fo'c'sle door where Smith and Strachan were asleep?"

"Yes. I bolta door and waita there for orders."

"Heanan called you aft after about a quarter of an hour, you said?"

"A little time, p'raps ten minute, p'raps quarter hour."

"Please describe again what you saw when you reached the poop."

"François he steer, Heanan stand by his side, they talka together. Patterson dead close

by wheel, and the capitano he lay by companion."

"Did you see the boy Camelier?"

There was a perceptible pause before the answer came, as though the Italian turned his mind over from what he had actually seen to what he had been primed by the mate to say.

"Yes, sir; he standa by bulwarks on starboard sida, with rope tied round wrists to rigging."

"Why had he been bound?"

"Mister Heanan say he tie him up to maka him keep quiet."

"Why should the mate be afraid he would not keep quiet?"

Dhura shrugged his shoulders. "I nota know, sir."

"Did the boy look as if he had been knocked about?"

"No, sir."

"Didn't it strike you as curious that the mate should lash the boy to the rigging unless he had been giving trouble?"

"I nota think. The mate he tella me."

"Still, as one who knew the plot, didn't it suggest to you——"

The Lord-Advocate, who was prosecuting counsel for the Crown, jumped to his feet.

" My lord," he said, " I must protest against the barefaced attempt of my honourable friend to suggest anything to the witness which might fit in with his own theories."

" The advocate for the defence must confine himself to actual statement of facts in conducting his cross-examination," said the judge gravely.

Mr. Webber smiled cheerfully at the jury, as though he trusted to their intelligence to accept the theory he was going to have put to the witness, and changed his line of attack.

" You said that Camelier, Smith, and Strachan agreed to take their shares of the dollars. When did they actually agree to do so ? "

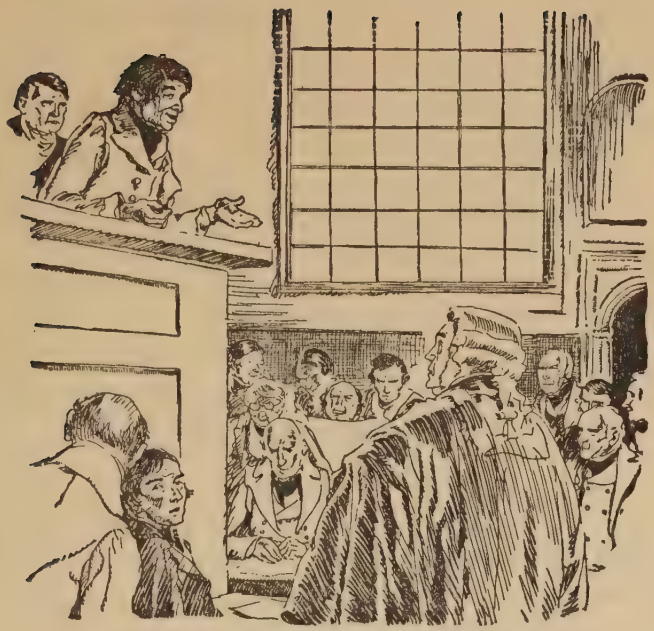
The answer came glibly enough as an evident part of the tale Dhura had been taught so well.

" At the meeting in cabin. Mr. Heanan he say how much each get."

" There was, I believe, a quarrel on that occasion as to how the money should be divided ? "

" Me and François, we say we wanta more. Others they say quita satisfied."

" What happened then at the second meeting



" Me and François, we say we wanta more."

in the cabin when there was another quarrel, during which Smith picked up Strachan and flung him across the table ? "

" I steer ship at second meeting. Nota know what happen."

" But you must have heard a pistol shot from the cabin."

The Italian seemed rather taken aback. Mr. Camelier looking at him believed that here was a weak spot in the carefully-concocted

story. He listened eagerly for the man's answer.

"I nota remember any shota, sir."

"Oh, come now. You were at the wheel, you say—you must have heard it."

"Nota remember hear pistol," repeated Dhura stubbornly.

"H'm, you don't seem to suffer from deafness either. At least you remember seeing Smith with his arm bandaged?"

"Sailors plenty time hurt arm."

"You do not seriously mean to tell me that you knew nothing of Smith having been wounded by Heanan in the arm with a pistol?"

"Me nota know nothing," was the sulky answer as the Italian cast a vicious look at Heanan, as though accusing him of having landed him in this difficulty.

"It must have been well known to all hands what had happened," the advocate insisted quietly.

Amid a breathless silence he waited for an answer. It was quite clear to every one what the line of defence was to be, and how much depended upon Mr. Webber being able to discredit the Crown witness.

"You mean to tell the court that you did not know that the man Smith had been wounded in the arm?"

"I nota know."

It was a critical moment. Obviously the Italian, now thoroughly on his guard, would act on the defensive and stick stubbornly to his story, meeting all awkward questions with his monotonous "I nota know." How would Mr. Webber make the most of the little he had already gained?

"Isn't your story as it concerns the boy Camelier, Smith, and Strachan a tissue of lies?"

Again the Lord-Advocate leaped to his feet. "M'lud," he said in an aggrieved tone, "the witness for the Crown is giving his evidence to the best of his ability under the disadvantage of not speaking or understanding our language. I must protest against such an insinuation on his veracity as made by my learned friend."

"I think," said the judge quietly, "that while the advocate for the defence of Camelier is entitled to use every endeavour to sift the evidence of the witness in cross-examination, he must not impugn his veracity in such a wholesale manner."

"Very well, m'lud," snapped the advocate. "I am quite willing to leave the veracity of the witness to the perspicacity of the jury."

A titter of laughter ran through the court as with a careless wave of his hand Mr. Webber resumed his seat. It was little he had been able to do, but he had at least left in the minds of the jury a serious doubt as to the truthfulness of the Italian, and made what seemed to the public, and probably also to the jury, a neat hit.

The case for the Crown being finished, and the time after four o'clock, the proceedings were adjourned until next morning, when it was understood that the boy Andrew Camelier would go into the box to give evidence on his own behalf.

CHAPTER V

IN THE NICK OF TIME

ANDREW had slept but little during the night, and awoke on the morning he was to give evidence with a cold fear in his heart which he tried in vain to throw off. He had spent the hours of darkness going over in detail each event of the past three months, examining the story which he must tell on the morrow as though he himself were the judge and jury, seeking to view it dispassionately and without bias, asking himself whether it bore the stamp of truth when put beside the half-truths in Dhura's evidence. When at last he fell asleep he was haunted by fantastic dreams compounded of the evil deeds on board the *Jane* and memories of the hours of peaceful happiness spent with his mother in the house in Kirk Street.

Before the trial commenced, and indeed until

yesterday, he had been buoyed up by a confidence which he now knew had been premature. In the joy of finding at last a father whom he could love and respect, and who loved him in return, there had been a depth of quiet contentment which he had never known before. A heavy burden had been lifted when he knew that he could place himself in his father's hands and leave to him the work of his defence.

His mother had been allowed to visit him twice every week while he was awaiting trial, and there had been the constant visits of his father and Mr. Webber to cheer him. Both lawyers were confident of acquittal, and his mother had laughed away his fears, saying that with right upon their side, and a brilliant advocate to defend him, he would soon be free. She spoke to him of happy days to come when they should move into the new house in George Street, and start life afresh the three of them together. The memory of past unhappiness would quickly fade, she said, and before them stretched out long years of sunshine and content.

Their confidence and hope had borne him up during the weary waiting in the squalid bareness of his prison cell in the Tolbooth.

As the trial drew near he even welcomed it ; a few days of standing in the public gaze, seeing the toils close round the murderers, and he would be free.

Yesterday had come as a shattering blow. When he knew that Dhura had turned king's evidence he had believed that the true story would be told ; for what interest had the Italian to tell aught but the truth ? He had listened in mingled horror and incredulity to the cunning blend of truth and falsehood, and waited eagerly for Mr. Webber to brush aside the falsehood and expose the truth.

With something akin to despair he found that all his advocate's skill could not break down the stubborn venom of the Italian. He had been anxious to go into the box himself and tell his story fearlessly ; but now he shrank from the ordeal. He would be forced to make certain admissions which the cunning of the prosecution might well claim to fit in with Dhura's testimony ; for the rest it was but his word against the Italian's. If he was shown to have been weak enough to remain quiet when he should have spoken—if he admitted, as he must do, repeating to the boy at Barra

the words of Heanan, spoken as though by the rightful captain of the brig, helping to prepare the boat, aiding the mate in sailing her out to the *Jane*, giving a hand in the work of stowing the dollars—who could doubt but that he had gone over to the mutineers ; who would believe that the dollars had been placed in his sea-chest unknown to him by Heanan or the Frenchman ? Since Strachan had accepted his share, who would credit Smith and the cabin-boy with greater probity and courage ?

As he stood in the witness-box the very atmosphere of the crowded court seemed hostile. He looked up at the public gallery where his mother sat. She seemed paler than ever this morning, her smile more forced, as though she too had slept badly and was haunted by the fear that things might go amiss to-day. His father's face looked white and drawn, as with tightly-compressed lips and bowed shoulders he leaned over the table studying a mass of papers. Mr. Webber looked as jauntily confident as ever, but since yesterday Andrew could not share that confidence.

If only his captain were here to-day how

different things would be. If he could see again those deep blue eyes, that merry twinkling smile, and hear that calm unmoved voice. If only he could grip his hand again before he began his evidence.

As the picture of his hero making his last desperate fight at the head of the cabin companion on that tropic dawn flashed into his mind he felt a sudden shame at his own weakness and despair.

Let him at least honour the memory of a brave man by following his example, and, if things came to the worst, by being ready to go down fighting to the last.

He squared his shoulders and took a tight grip of himself. Raising his head he cast a swift look upward to the gallery. He forced himself to smile and wave his hand to his mother, repeating in his mind the old Latin tag learnt from Dominie Ogilvy, *nos morituri te salutamus*. Then with head held high he turned to take the customary oath and place himself in the hands of his advocate.

Skilfully Mr. Webber led him through the events of the past three months. Beginning with the coming of the *Jane* to Leith, Andrew

told the court how he had gone with Captain Johnson to his father's house, of his father's anger, and the innocent plot between his mother and the captain that he should go as cabin-boy aboard the brig.

The advocate made him tell the story of the interview in Don Sylva's house in Crutchett's Ramp, of how he had followed Gautiez ashore and overheard the conversation between the Frenchman and the Jew, of his encounter with the pale-faced clerk upon the landing and his warning to the captain, of the captain's good-natured contempt for a " pack of foreigners," and the tragic events which followed. He was allowed to tell the tale without prompting or questioning, for, since he had nothing to conceal, Mr. Webber was anxious to impress the court by the youthful candour of his witness.

When he told of how he had heard the shot on that tropic dawn, and of what took place upon the poop, his voice faltered and broke; when he described how the bodies of Captain Johnson and Patterson had been cast adrift in the small boat, his voice failed, and it was with difficulty that he continued the story.

From that point to the end he felt that the

attitude of the court was sympathetic, and he answered frankly the leading questions put by his advocate as to the terms of surrender to the mutineers, and his determination to bring them to justice. Having brought him to the point where the boat was wrecked in the heavy surf at Chicken Cove, Mr. Webber broke off abruptly and announced that he had finished his examination, resuming his seat with the feeling that his youthful client had won the sympathy of the jury and of the public.

The Lord-Advocate rose to cross-examine, his manner more suave and his voice more gentle than ever. Andrew had learnt from Heanan what might be hidden under a cloak of soft words and a courteous manner, and he had been warned that when most gentle and persuasive the counsel for the Crown was about to spring upon his prey.

"I shall not keep the witness long," he said smoothly; "but there is one point upon which I am not quite clear, and which seems to be the only one at issue."

He glanced round sharply at Mr. Webber, who was sitting at the counsel's table ready to spring up and protest against what seemed to be the

beginning of a speech. Then he shot the first question at Andrew.

" When you offered to make terms with the mate, you were, I take it, quite certain that you would have been murdered had you not surrendered ? "

" Quite certain," answered Andrew without hesitation.

" Your motive, then, in offering to come to terms was that of fear—personal fear for your life ? "

" No. I was no afeared for my life ; if it had only been my life I would as lief they had taken it."

" What, then, were your motives ? "

" I had made up my mind to try and save the lives of the others, Smith and Strachan, and to bring the murderers to justice."

" And very worthy motives too," beamed the Lord-Advocate graciously. " Very largely, then, we may say that your motives were quite disinterested ? "

" Yes."

" You dissociated yourself entirely from the mate and the two foreigners, and were, above all, anxious to see justice done ? "

"Yes."

"You were willing to do anything, undergo any personal danger, so long as you were instrumental in bringing the murderers to justice."

"Yes."

"You know, of course, that in law a contract entered into under duress—that is, forced upon one by threats—is not binding?"

"I did not ken that was the law."

"You will agree in any case that it is a just law?"

"Aye, it seems fair enough."

"You understand what is meant by being an 'accomplice after the fact'?"

"Yes."

"Suppose, for example, that you were in a lonely part of the country and you witnessed a murder done in cold blood; suppose the murderer threatened to kill you if you informed the authorities of what you had seen, would you as a good and loyal citizen feel obliged——"

Mr. Webber was on his feet.

"M'lud," he said hotly, I "protest against that question upon a purely imaginary incident."

"The protest is sustained," nodded the judge. "The learned and honourable Lord-

Advocate must confine himself to questions of fact."

The Lord-Advocate bowed genially.

" Very well, m'lud, I will put what I want in this way," and he turned again to Andrew. " Knowing what is meant by being an accomplice after the fact, do you now consider that you were justified in not making every effort to inform against these men at the very first opportunity."

Andrew hesitated. He saw where the Lord-Advocate was leading him, and yet was powerless to extricate himself.

" The mate knew fine my promise only held while we were on board the brig."

" But surely you had an opportunity at Barra to explain matters to the folk there ? "

" I had given a special promise to last only whiles we were ashore at Barra."

" Was that promise in keeping with your determination to inform against Heanan at the first opportunity ? "

" I hadna changed my mind."

" Quite so, and yet you had a fine chance to bring about the arrest of Heanan, save the brig and the dollars and your companions' lives,

and see justice done upon the murderers of your captain and an innocent sailor. Why did you not take it ? "

" I had given my promise."

" A promise given under threats. Do you now realize that had you done the right thing at Barra the brig would have been saved, and you yourself would not have been charged with being an accomplice in piracy on the high seas ? "

Andrew felt suddenly sick with tiredness. Why was this man standing there like a bewigged and well-fed spider scheming to get him into his web with these smooth words ? Was it not enough that the men who had committed cold-blooded murder and robbery should be brought to justice ? What had *he* done, or Smith, or even poor Strachan, that they, too, should be treated as the vilest of criminals ? He was tired of it all ; if only they would finish with it and let him sleep a long dreamless sleep instead of torturing him like this.

What was it the counsel had just asked him ? The question had slipped from his mind. Something about being an accomplice in piracy on the high seas, wasn't it ?

The counsel for the Crown had not waited further for an answer, for while Andrew hesitated his keen mind realized the value of taking it for granted that a witness under cross-examination could not answer a vital question.

"You doubtless now realize the extremely dangerous position you have placed yourself in?"

Mr. Webber was on his feet again.

"M'lud, I protest——"

"I withdraw that question," interposed the Lord-Advocate courteously, "it is quite obvious that the witness is fully aware of his position."

"M'lud," snapped Mr. Webber angrily, "I protest against the honourable and learned counsel drawing deductions for himself and passing them on for the benefit of the court."

"The honourable and learned counsel for the Crown will have an opportunity later on of deducing facts from the evidence given," said the judge quietly. "Until that opportunity arises he must confine himself to cross-examining the witnesses for the defence as he thinks necessary."

The Lord-Advocate smiled apologetically.

" Captain Johnston ! Is it really you ? "

" I am quite content to leave the question of complicity where it stands," he said. " I should like to put one or two questions with regard to the finding of the dollars in the witness's sea-chest at Stornoway.

" You admit, do you not, that the man Strachan accepted his share of the dollars ? "

It was still to go on then, thought Andrew to himself. Neither his own advocate nor the judge could protect him against this slow torture.

What fresh trap was being laid now? If only his friend the captain were——

A sudden commotion at the back of the court interrupted his thought and prevented his answering the question. All eyes were turned in the direction of the door which led into the court from the corridor outside. Two turnkeys were struggling to hold back a man who was attempting to force his way inside.

As Andrew looked, he saw the form of a tall, broad-shouldered man break through the restraining arms of the law, and make his way rapidly down the court towards the judge's bench.

A slight roll in his gait betrayed the seaman. Round his head was a bandage, under which there looked out a pair of sea-blue eyes above a face which, in spite of its pallor, showed the bronze tinge of a life spent in the open.

The crowded court swam before Andrew's eyes. He looked towards his father, then up into the gallery. Surely he was dreaming! And yet there was something very solid and real about the well-known figure, which had halted now, facing the Judge, the ushers on each side of him, the two discomfited turnkeys a step

behind him, hesitating as to whether to arrest him for this flagrant contempt for the majesty of the law.

So it was not a dream. The mist lifted from his mind, and everything became clear and sharp before his eyes. The pale afternoon sun filtering through the grimy windows became radiant and bright, the very court itself transformed into a place of joy. He leaned forward as he cried in his clear, boyish voice—

"Captain Johnson! Is it really you? How came you here, sir?"

Two sea-blue eyes met his with that well-remembered twinkling smile. The broad-shouldered man who had brought utter confusion to the High Court of Admiralty stepped briskly over to the witness-box.

"Why, Andrew lad, wherever else should I be but here to see justice done."

Andrew stretched his arms over the rail of the box, and felt two great gentle hands seize his, and hold them tightly in a grasp of love and welcome.

CHAPTER VI

HOME AGAIN

In later years, when Andrew looked back on that last hour of the day's proceedings in the Admiralty Court, he was always oddly reminded of a certain wonderful little square Indian box in his mother's room, which in its tiny interior contained many other little boxes, each a size smaller than the last, until, looking at them spread out on the table in front of you, you wondered how so many could be contained in so small a space.

Within the hour which followed the captain's dramatic entry into the court so many impressions were packed that, as he brought them forth from his memory and spread them out before his mind, he wondered how they could all have happened in so small a period.

With the captain's hands still gripping his own, the captain's eyes still fixed on his with that well-remembered gleam of quiet humour, he

heard the babel of voices from the gallery and the well of the court; the ushers were calling for silence, and when at length something like order was restored there came the grave, steady voice of the judge threatening to clear the court if the unseemly noise was repeated.

A gaoler led him back to the prisoners' dock, and as he went he noticed the demeanour of the others: Smith smiling broadly at the sudden turn of events—even Strachan looking more cheerful than Andrew had seen him since that fatal dawn in the tropics; Heanan with the same fixed, sardonic smile which he had maintained all through the trial; François deathly pale, with his eyes starting out of his head and his jaw hanging loosely as he clutched the rail of the dock.

By the time he had taken his place by their side, the judge was giving his consent for the captain to go into the witness-box. Amid a breathless silence he gave his evidence standing where, ten minutes ago, his cabin-boy had stood with the shadow of disgrace and imprisonment hanging over his head.

Andrew had no fear in his heart now; he was filled with an exultant feeling of happy relief;

nothing in the world seemed to matter; his hero was alive, and had come to the rescue of his friends in the nick of time.

He listened to the quiet voice describing how he had recovered consciousness to find sailors lifting him out of the boat into the gig of a fine clipper ship hove-to close by. Not until three days later had he recovered sufficiently to be able to give a coherent account of how he had come to be adrift and almost dead in a small boat. Poor Patterson was dead, and was buried at sea the day after they were picked up.

He found the clipper was the *Lark of Canterbury*, and that she had actually hailed the *Jane* the day before. On the arrival of the *Lark of Canterbury* at Cape Town he had been fortunate enough to find a fine barque, the *Dusky Queen*, due to sail within twelve hours for Plymouth. There had just been time for the captain of the clipper to go ashore with him and make a deposition before a lawyer, setting forth the facts relating to the encounter with the brig and the rescue. This document he had brought with him and would like to hand over to the court.

Mr. Webber then examined him as to the events of the morning of the outbreak. He told

of how the musket ball had grazed his forehead as he lay in his bunk, stunning him for a few moments, but not doing serious injury. On coming up the companionway, the captain said, he had been attacked by the mate with a clubbed musket. As he stepped forward to meet the attack he had seen Gautiez coming up behind Heanan. Suddenly Andrew had appeared and had leapt upon the Frenchman's back, bearing him to the deck.

He remembered, and was glad to remember it, the resounding crack with which Gautiez's skull had struck the planks, at the moment when the mate's musket crashed through his defence and he was knocked insensible. That was the last thing he recalled until he found himself being lifted into the gig of the *Lark of Canterbury*.

Then had come the most dramatic moment of all. The foreman of the jury, a long lanthorn-jawed timber merchant with an untidy shock of lank black hair, rose and respectfully intimated to the judge that they were satisfied as to the innocence of Andrew Camelier, Smith, and Strachan, and begged that they might forthwith be acquitted.

This request was greeted with quickly sup-

pressed cheers from the public gallery. The judge commended Andrew for his plucky attempt at the rescue of his captain and for his race after the customs officers at Lewis. He and his two companions would be set free immediately, and Dhura the Italian would be committed for perjury. The trial of Heanan and the two foreigners would be resumed at the usual hour to-morrow morning.

Cheering again broke out in court, and was taken up by the crowds assembled outside, who had heard of the unexpected arrival of Captain Johnson and his testimony in favour of young Camelier.

The judge then left the court, and Andrew stepped out of the dock with Smith and Strachan, free to run to his father and mother, who were waiting for him. His father shook Captain Johnson warmly by the hand, and begged him to drive to Leith with them, where a meal and a bedroom would be waiting for him.

" We shall have a lot to talk about, you and I, captain," he said with a smile, " and we'll be a merrier party this time than when ye last had supper with us."

" Dinna forget Smith and Strachan, father,"

said Andrew, turning to the two seamen who stood somewhat sheepishly a few paces away. "They'll be as hungry as myself after the prison fare, and would be glad of a good meal."

Mistress Camelier went up to them and held out her hands, which they respectfully took.

"Of course they must come. Any friends of Andrew's are our friends too. I expect Meg will find enough for us all for supper. Is your wound nearly recovered, Mr. Smith?"

"Thank ye, mistress, 'tis doing fine, and ma foot as weel. I'll be beatin' Mr. Andrew the next time we race, I'm thinking."

It was three weeks later, and Mr. Camelier had spent the day in Edinburgh with the captain on some mysterious errand, the nature of which was to be divulged only after supper.

Andrew had spent a happy day among his schoolfellows, who had given him a warm welcome on his return from his adventurous voyage. Even old Dominie Ogilivy had unbent, though he had gone through the motion, so familiar to Andrew, of taking his tawse out of the drawer in his desk. This had set them all laughing, for the dominie had said—

" Weel, Camelier, if I gave ye six for playing truant for one day, how many should ye have for being awa' frae schule for three months ? I'll let ye off if ye stand up before the ithers and tell us the story of the *Jane*."

After supper that evening they all gathered round a crackling log fire, for the weather had turned cold and wet, and the two men having lit their pipes, Mr. Camelier let out the great secret which had taken himself and the captain up to Edinburgh.

" I've spent a gey muckle of money the day," he said, looking very solemn. " I've bought a fine new brig, Andrew."

Andrew's eyes sparkled with delight. " I ken fine who'll be going with her as captain," he said.

" There's pickings yet in the Mediterranean fruit trade for a smart brig and a captain who kens the business," went on the lawyer, "and——" He looked across to the other side of the wide fireplace where Mistress Camelier was sitting, with Andrew on the footstool at her feet. " Well, lass, you'd maybe like to tell that spoilt bairn of yours what we are thinking of."

" The brig is lying in the Clyde," she said,

stroking the sleek black head lying against her knees. "We thought you'd be liking to sail her round to Leith with Captain Johnson, and——" She paused as though there was still more to come.

Andrew twisted round on the footstool, and looked up into his mother's face with sparkling eyes.

"Why, that'll be just fine, mother. And what next?"

"We thought, your father and I, that, seeing the new brig is to be called the *Jane*, with Captain Johnson in command, and Mr. Smith as mate, the owner's son ought to be going along for the first voyage to look after them."

Andrew jumped to his feet. "Is it true, father?" he said, looking from one to another, his face flushed with excitement. "Will we be taking Strachan along too?"

"You'd better ask the captain," smiled Mr. Camelier. "He's the man who chooses the crew."

"I think we can find a bunk for Strachan in the fo'c'sle," said the captain. "We're going to have a British crew this time."

His words reminded them of all that had

happened since the old *Jane* had left Leith on her ill-fated voyage, and they fell silent for a few moments.

The lawyer, looking round the happy circle gathered round the fire, trying to put aside the thought of what his hardness and avarice might have meant to them, felt a glow of pride for his son who in so many ways was like his mother, who, he said to himself happily, was the best wife a man ever had. The captain's mind was already busy with plans for the fitting out of the new *Jane*, while Andrew, gazing in the fire, saw the picture of a trim, fresh-painted little brig with snowy canvas entering the Straits of Gibraltar and advancing into the smooth blue waters of the Mediterranean, Captain Johnson, Smith, and himself standing on the poop, with Strachan at the wheel.

Mistress Camelier in her new-found happiness found time to think with shrinking pity of Heanan and François Gautiez, who last week had paid the penalty for their crimes down yonder on Leith Sands.

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